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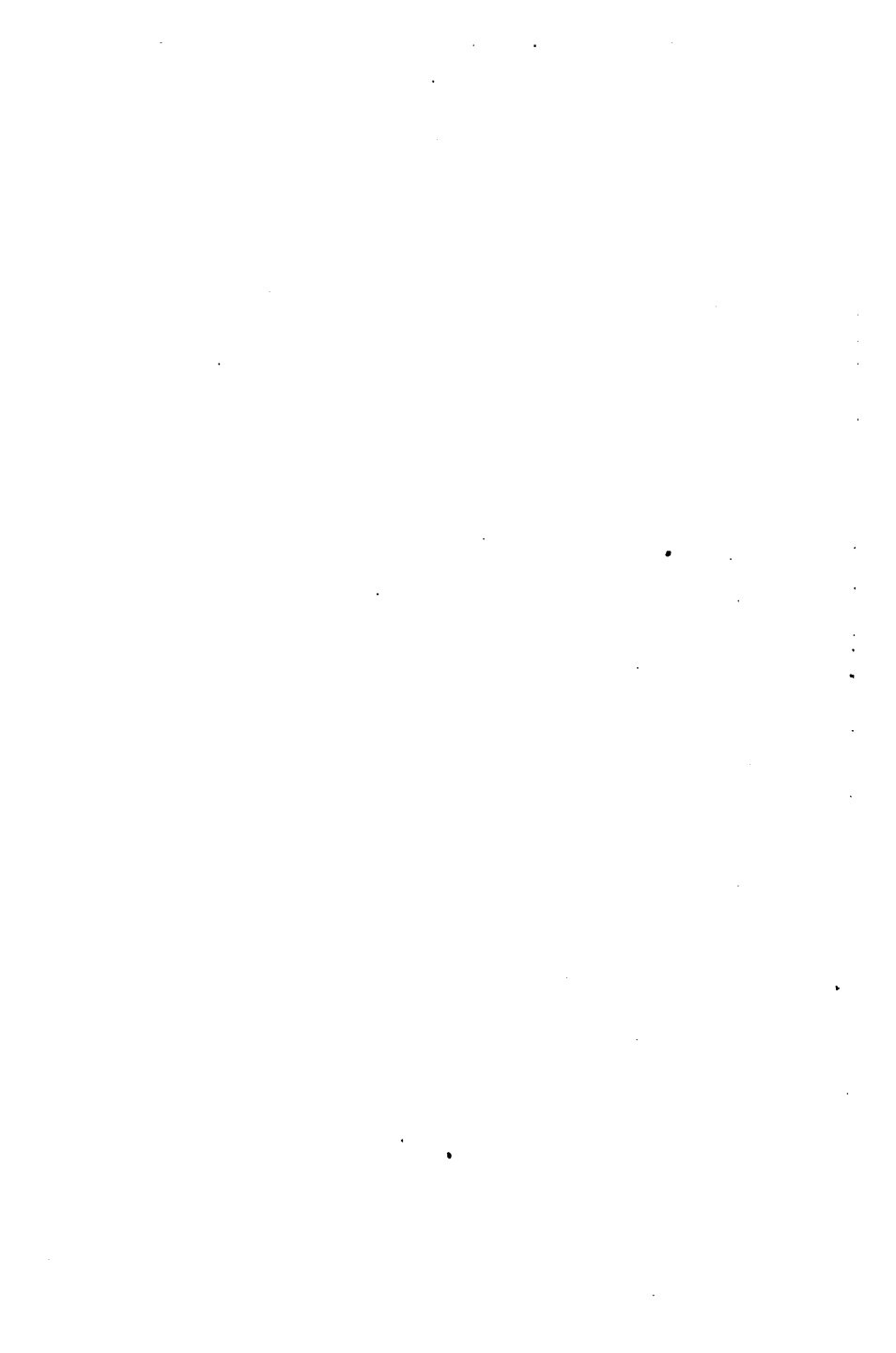
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THE BIBLE

*VERSUS*

THE CHURCHES.

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# THE BIBLE

VERSUS

## THE CHURCHES.

PERDITION AND SALVATION—WHAT ARE THEY?

BY

SEPTUAGENARIUS.



The doctrinal teachings of Scripture which seem opposed to each other  
are accurately understood only in so far as their harmony is seen.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

It will be apparent to those readers of the following pages, who have already made the matters therein treated a subject of thoughtful study, that the great biblical truths there brought to view throw a flood of light on the relation of man to his Creator, and upon the principles of the Divine government; revealing in their breadth, their fulness, and their exceeding glory, the ways of God to man. These very important truths, evangelical Christendom have hitherto suffered to be practically nullified by certain Scripture texts which seem directly opposed thereto, but which are here seen to be misinterpreted. Should life and health be spared to the Author, he intends, in a subsequent volume, to enter more directly into the subject adverted to, and to show that, in the light which radiates from the great truths here restored, the paradox, hitherto unsolved, which is involved in God's permission of moral evil, viewed in connection with His infinite holiness and benevolence, and with His absolute sovereignty, is open to a glorious solution.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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“Buy the truth, and sell it not.”—Prov. xxii. 23.

THE Apostle Paul says of the Holy Scriptures that they are able to make us wise unto salvation; and our Lord says, “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” He who obeys this precept, his one great object being simply and continuously that he may thus be made wise unto salvation, is sure to attain his end. Such an one will find no serious difficulties in his path. No puzzling inconsistencies will start up to perplex him. In his searching of the Scriptures he will realise the truth uttered by the Prophet, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.

But when he has attained this pearl of great price, ought his inquiries to end? The Scriptures abound with information on the most important subjects. On some of these they seem to teach opposite doctrines. Hence arise the opposed sects called Calvinists and Arminians. The questions on which these differ are intrinsically important, and it is very desirable to have a well-informed judgment respecting them.

But another and far more important question demands his attention. There seems to be a collision of Scripture testimony in a matter of yet infinitely higher moment to the great bulk of mankind, and which, nevertheless, Calvinists and Arminians alike suffer to pass without notice. In the New Testament we read that Christ is the Saviour of the world (1 John iv. 14); also, that “the living God is the Saviour of all men” (1 Tim. iv. 10); yet our Lord affirms, concerning a very large portion.

of the world, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." There are no texts of Scripture which seem more decidedly opposed to each other than these, yet there are none whose announcements are, or can be, more momentous. But how can Christ be truly the Saviour of the world, if the great bulk of the world will not be saved? How can the Scripture which affirms that "the living God is the Saviour of all men" be unerring truth, or truth at all, if instead of saving all men he will leave the great bulk of adult mankind finally unsaved? The question is pertinent—How comes it to pass that evangelical divines fail to recognise the pre-eminent importance of according to each of these texts its full and true import, and of concentrating their penetrative powers to supply to the Churches such an answer to the preceding questions as ought to satisfy them that these seemingly opposed averments are not indeed opposed, and that the unerring word is not the less truly unerring by reason of them?

We know the term "world" is never used in Scripture to represent believers, and cannot, therefore, in any instance, be rightly so understood; yet, as associated with the salvation he came to effect, our Lord commonly employs this term. He never says that the special object of his mission was to save believers. John xii. 47, he says, "I came not to judge the world, but to *save the world*." Also, John iii. 17, he affirms, "God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the *world* through him *might be saved*." Also, John vi. 51, he says, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the *world*." How mysterious! Christ came to save the world, yet the world is not saved! He has given his flesh for the life of the world, yet the thing thus dearly purchased, this life of the world, for which that awful price was paid, will never be realised! The only chance, humanly speaking, that the world shall indeed be saved by Christ, is, that we misunderstand words which it seems impossible to misunderstand, viz., our Lord's words,

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Again we say, how mysterious ! And the mystery, already so deep, becomes still deeper when we remember that Christ’s atonement is sufficient for all, and that the only thing needed to make it *effectual* for all is the drawing power of the Father ; for our Lord affirms (John vi. 44), “No man *can* come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him ;” and again (verse 37), “All that the Father giveth me *shall come* to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Thus we see that the measure or extent to which Christ’s atonement shall be effectual for men’s salvation, depends solely upon the willingness of the Father to exert his drawing power ; the willingness of him of whom we read that “he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world,” of whom we read also that he “so loved the world,” &c. These several facts duly considered, it cannot be reasonable matter of surprise that some theologians should entertain the opinion that all men will be ultimately saved. But, before we can attach any weight to their opinion, they must harmonise to our satisfaction the texts which affirm that Christ is the Saviour of the world, with our Lord’s words, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” and with some other texts, which seem also, though in less direct terms, to teach endless suffering. As for schemes of universal salvation, which require for their maintenance either an ignoring or a non-natural interpretation of any text of Scripture, we view them all as of merely human device.

Nevertheless, believing, as we do most devoutly, the inspired testimony that God is love ; also that Christ’s atonement is sufficient for Adam’s entire race ; and that he is not limited to times and seasons, but is able equally at all periods, so long as he shall reign as Mediator, to regenerate and sanctify all human souls ; our natural reason, acting on these Scriptural data, legitimately points to the final salvation of all. It strongly suggests that, the terrible price of human

redemption having been paid in the sacrificial death of the Son of God, those combined attributes of wisdom and of love which originated the plan before the foundation of the world, and which ever exist with an infinite fulness in God, would not be content to receive in return anything short of the full equivalent, viz., the salvation of our entire fallen race; God's regenerating grace being alone needed to insure it. But our conviction is strong that the duty of reason is an unresisting acquiescence, when God speaks in his word. We must not assume to be wise above what is written. When the inspired testimony seems conflicting, as on these momentous topics it did to the Author through many years, he is content to wait, assured that if not in this world, yet certainly in the next, its harmony will be seen; assured, too, that all that is truthful in his individual sentiments and feelings in relation to this most solemn subject is known to God infinitely better than to himself, and that it is duly appreciated; in short, that infinite rectitude will assuredly do right.

Unquestionably, it is cause for deep gratitude to God, *in those benefited*, that he has provided a Saviour, with power to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, even though he should finally regenerate and save only a fraction—suppose one out of every ten or twenty of Adam's adult family; in other words, even though Christ, instead of effectually bruising the serpent's head, and utterly destroying the works of the devil, as the inspired word seems clearly to teach he will do (1 John iii. 8), should withhold his regenerating grace from the great bulk of adult mankind, and repair only a fraction of the very direful and appalling calamity which sin has introduced. But let it be shewn, if this be possible, that a very bright page of inspiration has been hitherto overlooked, and remains even yet to be opened; in other words, let it be shewn, on the clear *and harmonious* testimony of the infallible word, that God's eternal Son is not merely a potential, or might-be Saviour—which, correctly interpreted, means no Saviour at all

—of the great bulk of mankind, but that he will be the actual Saviour, in some way, and at some period, of our entire fallen race; and how truly, in such case, would the world—this fallen, unregenerate world—have cause for a ten thousand-fold thankfulness to God, and thrilling joy.

We repeat, let this be shewn on the *harmonious* authority of the infallible word,—for any conclusion derived from either one class or the other of seemingly discordant Scripture texts, not manifestly harmonised, is necessarily unreliable. The words, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” are those of our Divine Lord, and we are satisfied they are not used figuratively. No conclusion which ignores these words, or which assigns to them any other than a literal meaning, can deserve our confidence.

The Author’s carefully formed judgment, the result of much anxious and persevering thought, on the momentous, but seemingly discrepant revelations,—Christ the Saviour of all men (1 Tim. iv. 10), yet the wicked everlastingly punished,—will be seen in the following pages. No true Christian will deny that the harmonised truth on these most important topics, if attainable, is to us fallen ones the most momentous of all truth. His explanation of the seemingly opposed texts has this notable impress of truth, that it shows their teachings compatible with each other. Less than this ought not to satisfy the devout critic. Without this harmony, he cannot or he *ought not* to feel satisfied that he has arrived at the absolutely true meaning of the inspired texts. The new, but literal and natural, interpretation given in this work to two kindred utterances, one by our Lord, and the other by St. Paul, and through these to other Scripture texts,—an interpretation which destroys the seeming opposition of many Scriptures to each other,—is solely, so far as the author knows, his discovery. Literally understood, those utterances teach a truth of high moment, which has hitherto, as by common consent, been overlooked. It has been shut out by

an interpretation which is not legitimate, but which harmonises with the established opinions. The words to which we refer suggest, and demand, a conception very different from the ordinary one, but still a literal conception, of our Lord's very awful words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." These biblical discoveries enable the Author to see harmony, where hitherto there seemed discord, in the teachings of Holy Writ. He has reached the usual term of life. If his conceptions of the unerring announcements referred to be indeed truth, it is certain they ought not to die with him. He therefore publishes them. The reader will judge for himself of their Scriptural truth. The unerring word, *in its literal teaching*, is the Author's sole basis. He values no other authority.

If in some instances the same truth or thought is re-introduced, the reason is that its presence is deemed necessary to sustain or complete the current argument.

We think the following pages will show that the glad tidings which the Gospel reveals are infinitely better tidings for this fallen world than good men generally believe them to be.

## CHAPTER I.

## PERDITION AND SALVATION—WHAT ARE THEY?

WE commence with the Scripture revelation concerning the punishment of the wicked. Our Lord calls it an everlasting punishment. The eternity thus predicated of it, viewed in connection with God's foreknowledge of this terrible issue before Adam's creation, seems diametrically opposed to what the Scriptures elsewhere teach in reference to the goodness and mercy of God. Our Lord tells us that, in the final judgment, the sentence which he will address to those on his left hand,—*i. e.* to all who are not found at death in that narrow path, of which he elsewhere says, "few there be that find it,"—will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And he afterwards repeats this most awful announcement in the words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

With the knowledge which all history, sacred and secular, supplies of the character and conduct of our fallen race through all past ages, and with our personal observation of the moral and spiritual character of the world's population in our own days, all combining to show that those of our race who have been regenerated and born again are a very small minority; these terrible words seem to leave us no alternative but to believe that an eternity of the keenest agony awaits, finally, an overwhelming majority of this world's population, infants and young children only excepted; that is, of all the men and women who have lived from the time of Adam until now, or who shall hereafter live, up to that millennial period which shall immediately precede the end of the world.

With deep humility, with profoundest reverence, it behoves us to contemplate the revelations which our Lord has made to us on this most awful subject; and it is with a deep consciousness of these feelings that we call this revelation the greatest mystery of the Bible. We so call it, because, while the great mystery of redemption, "God manifest in the flesh," is a most glorious mystery, which exalts, beyond any conception possible to us otherwise, the Divine character and perfections, this revelation of punishment never to end, and with which the keenest of all excruciating tortures seems to be eternally associated, shocks all our moral conceptions. We mean the torture produced by fire, or which fire fitly represents. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" shall forfeit for ever the inestimable boon of a rational existence, a nature akin to that of Deity,—shall forfeit this, and, with more or less of penal suffering, return to its original nothingness,—had this been the sentence pronounced, we should not speak of mystery. Those moral sentiments which our all-wise Creator has implanted within us would approve the judgment. But that a punishment which is so great that whatever suffering or loss can possibly be associated with a final extinction of being is, as compared to it, less than a drop to the ocean,—that a punishment, the bare idea of which so overwhelms all our conceptions, should be announced by our divine Saviour as that which will be the eternal inheritance of an exceedingly large portion of the race whom God has brought, and is still continuously bringing, into being,—whom also that Saviour came to save,—this, if it be indeed true, must, we think, be admitted by every one to be the deepest and most awfully mysterious of all mysteries.

But there is a special reason why we call this revelation, as popularly understood, the greatest mystery of the Bible. It involves a moral difficulty so serious as to justify, and even necessitate, the doubt if we rightly understand its words; we mean the words *everlasting punishment*. The moral diffi-



culty to which we refer consists in what seems to us an impeachment of the moral character of God, viz., an impeachment of his goodness and mercy. We know there are no necessities which press upon God, or can press. In this he differs essentially from creature beings. He is ever free to act just as he pleases. He is free to create, or not to create. He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. We know also that his knowledge is infinite, extending equally to the future as to the past. His only necessity is his highest possible freedom. It is a necessity to be guided solely and exclusively by his own infinite perfections, his wisdom, his rectitude, his goodness, his love. Before Adam was created, He knew that he would fall, also what would be the final consequences to every one of his innumerable descendants. He knew that in spite of the teachings and warnings of their own conscience, and of his divine revelation, so far as it should be known to them, such would be their obstinacy and hardness of heart, such their moral blindness, and antagonism to spiritual holiness, that incomparably the greater number of them would die in their sins. Knowing this, and without necessity other than as just stated, he nevertheless pleased to create man; and the doctrine in question, as popularly understood, teaches us that the final issue which he foresaw and foreknew, at and before Adam's creation, and with all the exactness that he will know it at the final judgment, was, that an eternity, literal and absolute, of agonising suffering too horrible to think of, would be the portion of a very large majority of the countless millions whom he then decided to bring into being. The reader will judge for himself if this be not a very serious moral difficulty.

And this difficulty is increased by the consideration that had God's goodness interposed to prevent his creation of a race which could not be born otherwise than in sin; also most of whom, notwithstanding his provision of a Saviour, God foreknew would live and die sinners; sin in that race would

have been prevented, and mercy not needed. But, this interposition not having been exercised, God's revelation of himself as love, and therefore as goodness in its highest form, would seem to authorise, not the hope merely, but the assured belief, that goodness would be still triumphant, and that God, having decided to create, through sinful parents, a race of sinners, his goodness aided by his infinite wisdom would, at such time and in such manner as that wisdom should direct, secure finally the salvation of them all. But our Lord's words, *everlasting punishment*, as commonly understood, shut out this hope. We ask, then, do not these considerations furnish very strong reasons for doubt if we understand correctly those awful words?

But there is another aspect in which the Divine goodness seems also to be seriously impeached by the popular opinion of the eternal punishment.

For, foreknowing Adam's apostacy, God "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world" a Saviour great and glorious, his only begotten Son, who, when the fulness of the time was come, appeared in human form—"God manifest in the flesh"—and finally died upon the cross for the redemption of Adam's fallen race. But the atonement he thus made, though sufficient for all, and, as his inspired Apostles teach us, *designed* for all; for they say that he "died for all" (2 Cor. v. 15); and, still more exactly, that he "tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9); yet, divine influences being needed to make that atonement effectual, as our Lord distinctly affirms, viz., "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44), it hath, nevertheless, not pleased God through all past time, nor will do in the future until the predicted millennial period shall arrive, to impart those influences otherwise than very, very partially. God certainly foreknew all this. He foreknew exactly what he would do, and what he would not do. He foreknew that he would withhold the outpouring of his Spirit just

in that measure and degree that he has withheld it. He foreknew also that that outpouring was indispensable, to correct men's natural obstinacy and unbelief ; in short, to regenerate the world. He knew that without this these natural moral evils could not be corrected ; he knew that without this Adam's race could not be restored from the fallen state in which he had decreed to bring them into being ; in short, that they could not otherwise be converted, or realise a saving faith in Christ. And if the popular opinion of the everlasting punishment be the true one, God foreknew that the consequence of this withholding of his Holy Spirit would be to render nugatory, as regards an exceedingly large majority of adult mankind, that atonement which he designed to be "a propitiation for the sins of the whole world," and to suffer his own most cherished object to be, to a very large extent, defeated. Thus the infinitely good and holy One, who has been pleased to create in a fallen nature our entire vast race, except only Adam and Eve, appears as withholding from the great bulk of them the mercy they so especially need for their restoration, viz., his regenerating grace, which is essential to bring them to Christ, and with the certainty that through the want of this they shall endure his awful wrath, in intense suffering, for ever.

Surely it will not be denied that the preceding considerations suffice to show that the doctrine of eternal punishment, as commonly understood, presents most serious moral difficulties ; and every one who is conscious that he cannot remove or explain them, is, we think, bound to acknowledge that the doctrine in question, as he understands it, is an exceedingly great mystery. Such, the Author admits, was his own case through the far larger portion of his adult life. He felt most strongly the mystery, but the words of our Lord seeming so plain he could only stand in awe, profound awe ; assured then, just as he is now, that the Judge of all the earth will do right ; assured too that sooner or later this great fact, con-

jointly, as he ever hoped, with another truth of Scripture,—the truth ever delightful to contemplate, that “his mercy endureth for ever,”—will be made abundantly clear to every individual of God’s intelligent universe. Not that he ever doubted, even for a moment, God’s absolute and inalienable right,—a right in which He differs so essentially from the most exalted of creature beings,—to do as he will with his own. For He is the absolute owner and proprietor of all the beings he has made—the rational and intelligent equally with the irrational—and is therefore accountable to none. Even cruelty, therefore, were it possible to God,—which, eternal praise to his name, it is not,—even cruelty, however intense and protracted, would not be unrighteousness in him. For if his right be absolute and unlimited, as unquestionably it is, how could it become contrary to right, or unrighteous? Still, though not unrighteous, it would not be the less certainly and obviously a violation of goodness and of mercy. Waiving this, however, we repeat that the idea that God should put forth his creative power with the certain foreknowledge that the result would be, not merely pain and suffering, but endless suffering to the great bulk of the rational beings he should form, or even to a single individual of his creatures, rational or otherwise, is to our best perception and judgment a gigantic moral difficulty.

As already stated, such were the Author’s sentiments and feelings through many years, his only consoling thought through those years,—and it was a potent relief,—being that all these to him overwhelming considerations are known to God infinitely better than to any of his creatures; that he is too wise to err, too good to be unkind; and that although we possess not the key to unlock the mystery, nevertheless there is a key. His conviction that there is a key was strengthened by the thought which appears as a motto on our title page, viz., that “the doctrinal teachings of Scripture, which seem opposed to each other, are accurately understood only in so

far as their harmony is seen." This thought confirmed that conviction, for we know it is written (1 Tim. ii. 6) that Christ "gave himself a ransom for all"; also (1 Tim. iv. 10) that "the living God is the Saviour of all men." These, as well as many other testimonies to the same effect, are in God's accredited book, equally as are the words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." They are seemingly opposite teachings—decidedly opposite. But the said motto is true. No one, who acknowledges that the Holy Scriptures are God's unerring word, will question its truth. If, then, we do not see the harmony of these seeming opposites, are we not bound, in honesty and truth, to admit that we do not accurately understand them? As regards at least one of them, our understanding must be at fault, for God's word cannot contradict, it cannot falsify, itself. Christ cannot be in truth the Saviour of those whom he does *not* save; and if it be true that countless multitudes of our race shall suffer in endless agonies God's eternal vengeance, it cannot also be true that Christ has ransomed those multitudes, or any of them. But, after announcing that the living God is the Saviour of all men, the inspired writer adds, "specially of those who believe." How noticeable is this addendum! Surely these added words have a meaning! What is it? They fix the sense of the preceding word *all*, in a way that makes any evasion of its literal meaning, its true universality, impossible. They teach, as plainly as language can teach, that "the living God is the Saviour of all men" universally, whether believers or not, but "especially of believers." Is this, then, the true meaning? We know no other meaning, plain and direct; none whatever, except such as ingenuity might devise in substitution for the plain and natural, and, therefore, for the true. And that it is the true meaning, no one would question or doubt, if the words were not also on record, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," and that a few other texts seem also to testify, though less directly, to the same effect.

This, then, is the dilemma : Christ the Saviour of all men, literally a ransom for all ; yet, we are told, there are multitudes of men who, instead of being saved or ransomed, will be subjected to an endless infliction of suffering. And how have the Christian Churches, and their pastors, of whom we would ever speak with unfeigned respect, met this dilemma ? Have they said, "We need further light ; we are sure that God's inspired word is truth, and only truth, but we do not understand these seemingly opposed teachings ; we want more light ?" They have not so expressed themselves, for such has not been their feeling. Concerning the texts which speak of "everlasting punishment," and of "the worm that never dieth," the feeling commonly, we do not say universally, expressed in their preaching and writing, has been this : "We quite understand these texts ; one of them is highly figurative. We know the worm does not mean a worm, or anything at all resembling it ; but its meaning is very clear to us ; it means a self-reproaching conscience. Our conception of these texts is assuredly the true conception. All who die unregenerate, and their name is legion, will endure an eternity of penal suffering—God's awful wrath, for ever and ever. This is unquestionably the meaning, when we read in the sacred Scriptures of everlasting punishment, and of the worm that never dieth. No other interpretation is admissible." Such has been, and is, their manifest feeling. And it would be quite consistent with their practical creed if they added, "As for the texts which teach, apparently, Christ's universal redemption, a proper latitude is allowable in their interpretation. When we read that Christ died for all, that he tasted death for every man, and that he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and other texts to the same purport, our duty is to understand them just as we think best—Calvinists in one way, Arminians in another. All that is imperative is, that we do not so interpret them as to discredit at all, or give any tinge of doubt to, our aforesaid conception of God's ever-

lasting punishment, for that is assuredly the true conception." We think we do not exaggerate, in thus representing the belief which exists on this subject in the Evangelical churches. Thus, while Universal Redemption and Everlasting Punishment seem as though arrayed against each other in God's inspired word, *and while yet unharmonised*, Christian men pronounce in favour of the latter, and affirm that everlasting punishment, in the sense of an eternity of penal suffering, is the true doctrine of Scripture.

If they are right in this, it follows, obviously and inevitably, that Christ's redemption of all men, which is so prominently announced by the sacred writers, and in language so varied, yet in every case so clear and definite, is something very different indeed from what it purports to be. Ask our excellent Evangelical ministers, and their church members, their true and deliberate conviction as to what is the destiny of the world's adult population, who have lived from the days of Adam down to the present era, and are now passed into the world of spirits. Did so much as one-tenth of them die regenerate? Did even a single individual of the world's entire population who perished in the flood die regenerate? "Ah, no!" would be their reply, "we have no ground to believe this, but the strongest reasons to believe the contrary." Ask them then, "Do you believe that Christ has redeemed these vast multitudes which no man can number, and that he will indeed save them?" To this some of them reply, "O yes, we believe that he redeemed them"; but even these unite, though most inconsistently, with their remaining Christian brethren, to affirm decisively, "We do not believe he will finally save them." Thus we see what is the intellectual attitude of our Evangelical churches generally, in respect to the seemingly conflicting claims of the doctrines in question, and the response they are prepared to give in reply to those claims.

Universal redemption, speaking with the voice of God in his word, demands their credence. Everlasting punishment,

speaking with the same voice, also demands their credence. And what do they reply? Do they say, "We are baffled, confounded; we don't know what to say. God's word is truth. Universal redemption, which is indeed universal salvation, is truth; for God's word assures us that 'the living God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.' It supplies also many other testimonies to the same effect. Everlasting punishment is truth, for that same word declares, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment.' It supplies also a few other testimonies, which appear to be to the same effect. We believe it all, but we do not understand it. We need more light. Lord, in thy great goodness, enlighten us, that we may understand these seemingly conflicting truths of thy holy word." We ask, do they thus reply? Some of these excellent men may thus reply, though we know it not; or they may express doubt, as did the late very estimable John Foster, author of the celebrated Essays. Generally, however, it is a one-sided credence which is given by our evangelical churches. Instead of harmonising the seeming discrepance, or, if they cannot do this, acknowledging mystery, they adjudicate in favour of their natural conception of the everlasting punishment, and affirm that an eternity of penal suffering, to be inflicted on all who die unregenerate, is the true doctrine of Scripture. Thus the fact of conflicting claims, or even of any seeming discordance of Scripture testimony in this matter, is not so much as recognised; for Christ's universal redemption of our fallen race, as well as the very many other teachings of Scripture which come into marked collision with that natural conception, are sacrificed thereto, and virtually ignored, by a non-natural and forced explanation of the very clear, direct, and unmistakeable texts, where they are found. We may, perhaps, best illustrate this by a device of the imagination, converting the texts which teach universal redemption on the one hand, and the leading text which teaches everlasting punishment on the other, into personal



witnesses, and the Churches into a jury, impanelled to receive their evidence, and to arrive at truth. To carry out this idea, we will give to each witness the name of the Gospel or Epistle which contains the inspired testimony. The reader will please mark his words, the inspired texts, and the comments of the jury.

*First Witness* ; Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 10). He says, "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe."

*Jury.* Your meaning, Timothy, is truth, unerring truth; we are sure of that; but your words very much perplex us. They do not rightly express your meaning. Had you said that the living God is *not* the Saviour of all men in *any* sense that will finally benefit all men, but *only* of those who believe; that would have been infallible truth; and, though your words seem to teach an opposite doctrine, we are sure that is your true meaning.

*Second Witness* ; Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 4). Speaking of "God our Saviour," he says, "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

*Jury.* Your words, "will have," are very remarkable. They must mean either that God *wishes to have*, or that he *determines to have*, all men to be saved; and in either case we might rightly feel sure that he would pour out his Spirit universally, instead of very partially as hitherto, on our fallen race, and thus prepare all men for so glorious an issue, through his regenerating and sanctifying grace. We know that this would ensure that salvation of all men which you say God our Saviour "will have"; and we know, too, that without this it will not, *and cannot*, be accomplished. Nevertheless, thousands of years have rolled on, and God has not done this, nor will do, until the millennial period, though it would have been as easy to him through all past time as it will be then. We must conclude, therefore, that your words do not convey

accurately that unerring truth which we know is in your mind and thought, and which it was your design to utter. Doubtless there is a verbal inaccuracy. Instead of saying, "who will have all men to be saved," ought you not to have said, "who will have *some* men of *all* ranks and classes to be saved? That would have been infallible truth, and we doubt not that is your true meaning. Your word *all* is unquestionably right, but we doubt not you will admit that it ought to have been preceded by the little word *some*. "Some of all" is your true meaning.

*Third Witness*; Hebrew (Heb. ii. 9). He says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

*Jury*. Your closing words, Hebrew, are very noticeable, viz., "that he should taste death for every man." We are sure the thing you intend to say is unerring truth, but we do not understand your words. Christ is our surety. If a surety, recognised and approved by the Judge, taste death for a man, his doing so is certainly and inevitably to save that man from death. But we know the salvation which Christ has purchased for our fallen race will not save every man. Though it will save all very young children, we know that comparatively speaking it will do little more than this, until the millennial period shall arrive. We mean that, infants and young children excepted, it will avail only for a very small fraction of the myriads of millions of men and women who have lived hitherto, and a very small fraction of the one thousand millions now resident on earth. It will save only that small minority of mankind who, in deep penitence and faith, come to Christ for salvation. Therefore, when you utter the words, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man," we are sure you do not mean the thing which your words literally express. You do not mean that so much even as one half of our adult race will be finally saved, or

finally at all benefited by that atoning death. We are sure your meaning is truth, but your words fail to express it.

*Fourth Witness*; John (1 John ii. 2). Speaking of Jesus Christ, this witness says, "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

*Jury.* Your meaning, John, is unquestionable truth, but your mode of stating it perplexes us. When you say that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, you do not mean that he will finally save the whole world, or that he will finally advantage at all any adults except those comparatively few who become his true disciples during their residence on earth. We know it is scripturally certain that he will not do either of these things; and, though your words teach so clearly that he will do one or both of them, we are sure this is not your true meaning.

*Fifth Witness*; John (John xii. 32). This witness says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

*Jury.* Your words are difficult to understand, but we know what you mean. You do not mean *all* men, but *some* men,—i. e. a few men of all nations, and of all classes. If, instead of "all" men, we read, "a small proportion of the men born prior to the millennium, and all who shall be born during the millennium," that would be exact. Your word *all* is quite right, only the words *some of* ought to have preceded it. Had you said, I will draw some of all, or a few of all men unto me, that would have been the exact truth. We are sure, therefore, that is the truth you intend to express.

Thus we see that all the preceding utterances of Holy Writ are heterodox as they stand; and that in each of them man's correcting wisdom is needed to make their teaching orthodox.

*Sixth Witness*; Matthew (Mat. xxv. 46). He says, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

*Jury.* Aye, now we have a witness whom we can under-

stand. This is the true doctrine of Scripture, and our conception of it is the true conception. All who die unregenerate shall endure, through a ceaseless eternity, an agony of body and of mind too horrible to think of, and which, however originated, Scripture warrants our believing to be intense as that produced by fire on a living body. This is our assured conviction, for there can be no doubt as to the true meaning of this last testimony. It is only the preceding testimonies which are liable to misapprehension.

In these texts, and in the comments of the Jury, we have the Bible *versus* the Churches, and the Churches *versus* the Bible, unmistakably displayed.

Such are the seemingly opposite Scripture statements and teachings; and in the last reply of the supposed jury we read the verdict of the Churches thereupon. How clear, then, is the fact that the credence they give is a one-sided credence; and that against the belief they cherish, that an eternity of suffering too horrible to think of awaits countless myriads of our natural brethren and sisters—from whom the holiest and best among us differ in character only through God's distinguishing grace,—against this belief, any multiplication of Scripture assurances to the effect that Christ died for all, and that he is the Saviour of all men, has no more acknowledged weight or value than has a multiplication of mere ciphers in arithmetic. And is not this premature decision of Christian men,—this decision before harmonising the apparently conflicting Scripture statements,—a thing to be regretted? When, within the sacred arena of God's inspired revelation, his love and his vengeance appear as though competing antagonistically for our credence, can it be right that that credence should be given unreservedly to his vengeance, and denied to his love? We say, denied to his love; for to an Apostle's statement that the living God is the Saviour of all men, and to our Lord's affirmation that he will draw all men unto him, they give a confident denial. They insist that there are countless myriads

of men, even all who die unregenerate, whom God will never save; for that he not only suffers them thus to die, and thus to continue at the judgment, but that they will remain eternally unregenerate and unsaved. Surely, before insisting on this dogma, there ought to be some unmistakable authority for it in Holy Writ. Where is this to be found? We know of none. If they quote the aforesaid words of our Lord, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," we reply, These are very awful words, but they are not identical in meaning with the words, "These shall be eternally unpardoned and unsaved." We shall hereafter supply the Scriptural proof of this. If they say, The inference from these words is clear, the one averment involves the other; we reply, It does so only seemingly, and we cannot accept any evidence which is merely seeming or presumptive, if it contradict some direct and positive teaching of Scripture, such as we find in the texts we have quoted. These each and all reveal, *untrammelled by any conditions*, one great truth, viz., the redemption through Christ of our fallen race universally, and therefore, of necessity, their final salvation.

And shall not that truth be realised? Our Lord says, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35); and how often in the Gospels are the words, "that it might be fulfilled," appended as the reason of the event recorded. Shall, then, these many Scriptures, so pregnant with most important truth,—the truth that "the living God is the Saviour of all men," and not only of those who believe,—shall they each and all fail of fulfilment? We say emphatically, Certainly not. But we know there are some persons whom this appeal will not move. They are not open to reasoning on this subject. Their belief in an eternal hell, crowded with immortal occupants, is so strong that they might quite consistently say to us, "We are sure that not one of the Scriptures you have quoted to your supposed jury will be verified exactly and literally as you think; and as for the words of the Psalmist, 'He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for

ever,' surely no Christian man can believe that these will be universally verified. Certainly there are thousands of millions of men and women against whom he *will* keep his anger for ever; even all whom he suffers to die unregenerate." Thus deeply rooted in some persons seems their conviction of an eternal torment. All the numerous inspired testimonies, direct and indirect, which teach decisively the opposite, cannot so much as cause them to doubt. But we will not believe that Christian men generally will endorse their sentiment. They will not so estimate those testimonies, nor deem their teaching unreliable until corrected by additions or modifications of man's device. Again, therefore, we ask, Shall these Scriptures, which teach in terms so varied that Christ died for all, and is the Saviour of all men, shall they not be finally verified? We read of Death and Hell that they shall be cast into the lake of fire. They shall therefore pass away. "But the word of God liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23).

Seeing, then, that the universal salvation which these texts reveal is not accomplished in this life, it follows of necessity that it remains to be accomplished after death. Any merely presumptive evidence that God will not pardon and save in a future state, is negated by the infallible word which affirms so repeatedly, and in language so varied, that the redemption which Christ has accomplished is an universal redemption; none of which inspired utterances could be true in their plain and literal sense—which we are persuaded is the true sense—if pardon and salvation were impossible after death and the judgment.

And why impossible? Do the Scriptures make them so? They do not. The pardon and salvation which they make impossible is between death and the judgment, not *after* the judgment. Speaking of the dead who do not die in the Lord, they say, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still." Therefore, in common parlance, we say, with scriptural accuracy, "As death leaves us, so the judgment will find us." And if

it were not so, but, on the contrary, the redemption of Christ were made effectual to save all men before the judgment, that unspeakably grand and awful display of God's character and attributes, and of his essential antagonism to sin, which the judgment will furnish to his intelligent universe, and which his infinite wisdom sees necessary to be made, would not be forthcoming. But, this paramount object having been most fully accomplished in the dread solemnities of the judgment and its very awful sequence the second death, shall we still hear the solemn fiat, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still"? While the many texts of Scripture which reveal so clearly God's design of universal mercy through Christ remain unfulfilled, who may dare affirm that they never will be verified, and that that salvation of all men, which they all so directly assert or involve, will finally fail to be realised?

We know that a salvation which seems impossible to men is possible with God, for with God all things are possible. This was our Lord's reply to his astonished disciples, when they said to him, "Who then can be saved?" (Mark x. 26, 27). And we may rightly affirm that the power of Christ to save, *cannot* be limited to the present life. It can be limited only by the period of his mediatorial reign. So long as he reigns as Messiah, the Mediator and Deliverer, *i. e.* until that period shall arrive which the Apostle calls "the End, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father,"—until then, his power to regenerate and save is omnipotent, equally as it is now upon earth. While he still reigns as Mediator; while still "exalted a prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31), will he become powerless to regenerate and save? or will the essential benevolence of The Unchangeable One wane, or cease to be? Surely no Christian man will affirm either the one or the other.

To those who have not reflected thereon, pardon and salvation after death appear as something that cannot be. They

are deemed impossible. Our Lord did not so view them. In speaking of the sin against the Holy Ghost, he says (Matt. xii. 32) that "it shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." How clearly, though indirectly, is pardon in the world to come here revealed; for, had it been a false notion, our Lord would not have spoken of it but to rebuke the error. He, always so prompt to expose and rebuke false doctrine, could He choose thus to suggest it, by adverting to a forgiveness hereafter, if such forgiveness were impossible? All our Lord's words were wise words. He never spake unadvisedly. Except, therefore, as designed, like many of the Old Testament references, to cast a gleam of light into a future whose full revelations are for the present withheld, we can see no reason for his adverting at all to forgiveness in a future state. His words were complete without this reference equally as with it. Read verse 31: "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men"; and verse 32: "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." How complete are these sentences in themselves, and needing no addition. We ask, then, if the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin in a future state be a false doctrine, is it not most extraordinary and inexplicable that infinite wisdom, after uttering the words, "it shall not be forgiven him," should have added, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come"? The inference seems inevitable. The doctrine is either true or false. Our Lord's words sanction it, or they do not. Were they vain words,—*i. e.* mere expletives,—or have they indeed a meaning which deserves notice? We leave to the pious reader to answer this question. And how remarkable are the words which precede these, as we read Mark iii. 28: "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme." Our Lord does not say, *all sorts* of sins and blasphemies; he says, "all sins and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme." How



absolute is this statement! One sin is excepted, and only one, which confirms its absolute character as regards all other sins. No condition, no limitation except the one specified, is named or even intimated. Who, then, not inspired, may rightly interpose one? Because all sins shall be forgiven except the sin against the Holy Ghost, we ask, does it not follow that all sinners will be forgiven, except the sinners against the Holy Ghost? So understood, Scripture is seen to harmonise with Scripture. "Christ died for all." We shall speak of the excepted ones anon.

The forgiveness of sins hereafter, which our Lord suggests, St. Paul teaches in direct terms. In speaking of an incestuous church member, he writes (1 Cor. v. 3.5), "I have judged..... to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This text is, in our judgment, an incontrovertible testimony in this matter. We shall remark on it fully in another chapter.

We know that, notwithstanding Christ's redemption of fallen men in his atoning death and perfect righteousness, which fully satisfy all God's requirements, he not only permits, but ordains, that all his saved people shall die once. And why? Clearly not of necessity; except in so far as he sees it wise thus and otherwise to subject sinners, though redeemed, to more or less of suffering, and finally to death, before entering into their purchased rest. If it were of an absolute necessity, then Enoch and Elijah could not have been allowed to escape death; nor could the saints be thus privileged who will be resident on earth at our Lord's second coming. Notwithstanding the completeness of his redemption, the Almighty Saviour does not, at the earliest period of their life, regenerate even his elect people, but suffers many of them to remain several years unregenerate; and though he does afterwards renew and sanctify them, he brings them all finally to death. Is a high perfection of character eminently desirable? It is only through suffering it can be reached. We read that

He made the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. ii. 10); and shall he not perfect his redeemed in like manner? We know there is a death, called in Scripture the second death. This is literally death, the death of the body, equally as the first death, as we shall hereafter prove from Scripture. That same infinite wisdom which determines that his favoured ones, called in Scripture "the Elect," shall die once, in order, as we cannot doubt, to vindicate his justice and mark his abhorrence of sin, (for we know the elect are sinners as truly as others), determines also that the far larger portion of those for whom Christ died, and whom we may rightly call the Non-elect, shall die twice, viz., once on earth, and once again after the judgment, and in a manner incomparably more awful and terrible. The elect, notwithstanding their natural depravity and unregeneracy, and the death through which they are doomed in consequence to pass, are finally saved;—and why? It is because they are redeemed. For this reason, and only this, repentance, pardon, sanctification, and finally a perfect and eternal salvation, are vouchsafed to them. As regards the non-elect, therefore, we ask, Who may rightly affirm that the same reason,—the fact that they also are redeemed by Christ, who is the "Saviour of the world," and "gave himself a ransom *for all*,"—will not also, at some period of his mediatorial reign, insure for these, who are the great bulk of that fallen race for whom he died, the same blessings of repentance, pardon, and sanctification, which it insures to his elected ones while resident on earth.

We deem these thoughts important, and will, therefore, restate them. Christ is the Saviour "especially of those who believe,"—i. e. of his elect. He is the Saviour also "of the world." How then does he deal with these two classes, both of which he has redeemed. On the former he does not bestow that salvation immediately, but permits in many of them great excesses in wickedness, continued through many years, before he renews and pardons them. But he does renew and pardon

them, because he has redeemed them. Therefore their salvation is sure, in God's due time, though he subjects some of them to much suffering in life,—of which Job was an eminent example,—and all of them finally to death. We ask, then, is not the salvation of all for whom Christ died equally sure, in God's due time? As regards his elect people, we see that, notwithstanding postponement; notwithstanding also wickedness, suffering, and finally death, the salvation he has purchased for them becomes surely theirs in his own due time. And because God postpones much longer the salvation of the non-elect, and permits in most of them—certainly not in all—much more of intermediate wickedness, and inflicts upon them incomparably more of suffering, must we therefore say that he will have no due time at all for *their* salvation, but that Christ, who died for all, will, as regards them, have died in vain? Our answer is, Assuredly not. Christ has not died in vain for any. There is no stamp of vanity on any work of God. The omniscient one knew before Christ died, whom he would actually save; and he would not have published in his unerring word that Christ came to save the world, and that he died for all, if he knew that for any reason, no matter what, his death would be a failure as regards the great bulk of the world, that is as regards the great bulk of the “all” for whom he died, or even as regards one of them; for we do not believe that he died for Judas Iscariot, or for any whose sins our Lord has said will not be forgiven. The “life and immortality” which he “brought to light” was not designed for them; and our Lord's words, “Son of Perdition,” should satisfy us that they—or certainly one of them—were not designed for “life and immortality.”

But, in sober thought, is not the notion we are combating obviously untenable? Is it not repugnant to reason to suppose that God will, or that he can, be thus false to himself? Is it not morally impossible that he should suffer his own special designs to become, to a large extent, or to any extent

at all, a failure? For who is it that regenerates men? Who is it that quickens them into spiritual life? Who *can* do this but God? If men's conversion be God's work,—as unquestionably it is,—and if Christ died to enable a God of love honourably to himself to undertake and execute this work of regenerating sinners and pardoning them, is it not certain that God will perform his own cherished work—a work which none but himself can effect? Is it not certain that he will regenerate all for whom Christ died, and therefore the entire world, if it be true that Christ came to save the world, as his inspired word affirms he did, and if the Scripture also be true which says that he died for all? This is an important question, and to it, in the terms it is put, we see only one reply. We say, then, Assuredly it is certain. Assuredly Christ will not deliver up his mediatorial kingdom until, either in this life or the next, all whom God has designed to save shall, with hearts and wills renewed, be gathered into it.

We read (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6), “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” Again we can accept none other than the literal and evident meaning of the words *for all*. Emphatically, **THE RANSOM IS FOR ALL**. The Holy Spirit who inspired the Apostles to teach, not error but truth, has said it, and we rest in the confident assurance that the great truth he here declares will “be testified in due time;” testified, not *in words*—the great salvation had already long been so testified—but testified in its glorious consummation, when Christ shall “see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” But when shall this consummation be? It cannot be in this world, neither can it be prior to the Judgment; for if the Redeemer claimed all mankind as his ransomed ones before that awful day, then all mankind would stand before him clothed in his perfect righteousness, and the terrible realities of that day, so minutely described by our Lord, could not be realised. When, then, will this “due time” be? Though we assume not the gift of prophecy, yet

certainly that notable day of the Lord Jesus, announced 1 Cor. v. 5, and in sundry other texts,—notable as we believe it will be, equally as the Day of Judgment, though of a very opposite character,—commends itself to our understanding as probably that *due time*, when, amid the reverberated plaudits and rejoicings of God's whole intelligent creation, vying with each other in the power and harmony of their voices while they sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," the great fact so unmistakeably revealed in this text, shall be testified in the salvation of all human spirits not previously saved on earth; the fact that "Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all."

This same fact is set forth also by John the Baptist, and in words which make any but the true meaning impossible. He says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). How remarkable are the words, "taketh away the sin of the world." If these words are, in their plain meaning, unerring truth (as we may not doubt they are), it follows of necessity that, sooner or later, every sinner must be saved; for it is evident that sin taken away cannot be imputed, nor, therefore, punished; and we read (Psalm xxxii. 2), "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." But did the Baptist mistake? Ought he to have said, "who taketh away the sin of those who believe in him"? Evangelical Christians, who hold the Arminian creed, believe that Christ died for the sin of the world, but they view this only as laying a foundation through which, as an atoning sacrifice, acceptable to God, the sin of the world *may be* taken away; but they do not believe that the sin of the world *is* therefore taken away, or that it ever will be taken away. In common with their Calvinian brethren they believe that this glorious result will be realised, not by the world, or the bulk of the world, but only by a fraction of the world, viz., by those comparatively few of its adult population whom God regenerates in this life, and by that much larger number who die in infancy and early childhood. Never-

theless they all believe that the inspired word is unerring truth, but, though unerring truth, they do not believe the thing it affirms in this matter. They believe, concerning all who die unregenerate, *i. e.* concerning a multitude vast enough to people very many worlds to the extent ours is now peopled, that the Lamb of God will never take away *their* sin, and that God's gift of a Saviour to the world will be of no practical value to any of these. This seems indeed extraordinary. Why do not these excellent men prefer—ininitely prefer—to confess the words of the Baptist a mystery which they do not understand? Surely, this would be the honest course, and the right one. If their opinion be truth, *viz.*, that Christ will take away the sin only of believers, then the publication in Holy Writ, that "Christ taketh away the sin of the world," is the publication of a very serious error. Scott, whom we highly respect, explains the text thus; he says, "The Saviour taketh away the sin of the world by removing every hindrance to the forgiveness of the sin of all men throughout the world, who rely on him by humble faith"; he says, also, "in virtue of his atonement, Jesus takes away all the guilt of every believer." Clearly and obviously, this is to nullify the text. It is to expunge the Holy Spirit's term "world," and to substitute for it man's preferred term "believers," although all Christian men know that these terms are never used as equivalents in Scripture, but are used in contrast. But the Baptist says, "who taketh away the sin of the *world*." Whom, then, must we believe? Must we say that the Spirit of Truth who inspired him suffered him to utter an untruth, and suffered also an Apostle to record it? It is true, the belief of our present churches in this matter did not originate with themselves. It is traditional, and we need not apologise for accepting the Baptist's words as truth, in preference to any traditional belief of men. Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for traditions which they substituted for God's teachings. We view the realisation of these inspired words only as a

question of time. We believe that Christ, the Lamb of God, will visibly and manifestly take away the sin of the world at that precise time already fixed by God's infinite wisdom, when his doing so will bring the largest revenue of praise and glory to himself.

Two other texts, taken conjointly, furnish what we deem a decisive testimony in this matter. One is (2 Pet. iii. 9), "The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing (Gr. not *decreeing*) that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The other is (Acts v. 31), "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." In these texts the Holy Spirit testifies three things: first, God not willing (determining) that any should perish; second, God *willing* that all should come to repentance; third, Christ exalted to give the needed repentance and forgiveness of sins. If these inspired texts be unerring truth, we ask, Can any man who reverences that truth rightly doubt that repentance and forgiveness will be vouchsafed to all men? One of these texts informs us that to bestow these gifts is the mission of Christ. It tells us that for this purpose he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. It is, therefore, a part of his redeeming work, as much so as were his sufferings and death, and necessary to their saving efficacy, equally whether all men or only some men are saved. Certainly no sinful men could be saved, if Christ withheld from them his gift of repentance. Not one of the saints already in heaven would have been there had not God given to him repentance and forgiveness of sins. Having then, faithfully accomplished all that was terrible in that redeeming work, and drunk the cup of sorrows to its dregs, will our Divine Saviour be unfaithful in that other portion which demands from him no sacrifice at all, but is in harmony with the yearnings of his infinitely benevolent heart? Will he withhold finally from the great bulk of those whom he has created fallen, that restoring grace and mercy—in other words, that repentance and for-

givenness—to bestow which God exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour? Will he, through this default, render his atoning sacrifice nugatory to save countless millions of those for whom he died? Surely, we may with certainty pronounce this impossible. Our foundation is rock. God *wills* (determines) that all men should come to repentance. Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. Surely no evidence could be more decisive, to prove that *before* “*the end*” *shall come*, repentance and pardon will be vouchsafed to every sinner whom Christ came into the world to save. To suppose otherwise is to undeify God and Christ. It is to bring their plans, designs and purposes, together with their execution of them, down to a common level with our own, and even lower than our own; for it is not thus defectively—and, to a large extent, abortively—that sagacious men, though not gifted to foreknow results, commonly execute their cherished purposes.

We are not unmindful of the fact that the great hindrance to the ready acceptance of the truths so plainly declared in these texts has, hitherto, been the existence of a few seemingly opposite texts, one of which affirms, in direct terms, the everlasting punishment of the wicked. But, if unable to reconcile the latter with the former, to what conclusion are we reasonably led? We see two classes of Scripture texts; one harmonising beautifully with the scriptural character of God, his mercy, his goodness, and his love; the other in seeming antagonism thereto. To the oft repeated and loving assurance of the former, that “His mercy endureth for ever,” these latter texts seem to say in defiant response, “His vengeance endureth for ever.” We do not say that God’s mercy is incompatible with his vengeance, but we do say that mercy *for ever* is incompatible with vengeance *for ever*, in the one Jehovah. Surely then, mystery—deep mystery—attaches to one of these classes of texts, and where may we most reasonably look for it—in the former, or in the latter class? We



cannot reasonably doubt in this matter. There is no mystery in the former. They are in harmony with the most glorious truth which the Scriptures reveal, the truth that "God is love." This is the foundation truth of Scripture. To it we owe both the Saviour and the Scriptures which reveal him. The truth which these texts teach is, therefore, that which they seem to teach; and the mystery must be in the texts which seem to teach concerning a God who is love, and who has in consequence provided a Saviour who has "died for all," that his vengeance endureth for ever. Unquestionably, these texts also contain very important truth, for there can be no higher truth than that uttered by our divine Lord. And it is obviously very awful truth. But if they be interpreted to mean, or to involve, that vengeance will be eternal in God, we reject the interpretation. Vengeance and mercy cannot eternally co-exist in God. One may endure for a season, and the other eternally, in which case the temporary will be finally swallowed up in the eternal. Nothing can exist eternally in God but his essential attributes, and no one will dare to say that vengeance is one of these. "His mercy endureth for ever." This is beyond dispute. The infallible word declares it. Therefore, it cannot be true that his vengeance will endure for ever.

We reject this interpretation also because it goes directly to contradict the inspired declaration (Psalm cxlv. 9), "His tender mercies are over all his works." If it be true that a large portion of our sinful race will suffer eternally the appalling agonies of the second death—agonies excruciating as those produced by fire—God certainly foreknew this before he created them, for he ever knows the end from the beginning. Before he gave existence to the countless myriads of men and women, all born in sin, to whom the awful sentence will be addressed, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," he knew exactly what their character would be from their birth to their death. He knew that after a few

short years spent on earth in an unregenerate state—the only state possible to them as children of fallen Adam and not renewed—their final destiny would be to dwell for ever in devouring flames. Nevertheless, he was pleased to create them!! And although in the counsels of eternity, before even the foundation of the world, he provided a Saviour for them, he nevertheless determined not to pour out his Spirit upon them to quicken them into spiritual life, and cause them joyfully to accept that Saviour, but decided to suffer them to remain for ever in that same fallen unregenerate state in which he gave them being. If, then, it be true that God will thus execute his vengeance for ever upon these fallen ones, whom, knowing the certain result, he nevertheless determined to bring into being, obviously it cannot also be true that his tender mercies are over all his works! Certainly these propositions cannot both of them be true. If we accept one of them as truth, we must necessarily reject the other. How clear then is our duty. We must reject, not the *texts* which stagger us; certainly not—we must believe, undoubtingly, assuredly, that there is truth in them; truth very solemn, very awful; though it be to us in its exact meaning hidden truth—but we must reject determinedly the anti-scriptural inference which men deduce from these texts; the inference that God's vengeance will eternally supplant his mercy in reference to all whom he creates fallen, and suffers to live and die in that same dreadful state, unrestored, not "born again." We call the fallen state into which mankind are born, a dreadful state; we mean, viewed apart from a certainty that the infinitely benevolent Creator will, sooner or later, through that regenerating grace which Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give, restore them from that very awful state. For who may rightly deny that a fallen nature, endowed with immortality, and suffered to remain eternally unrestored, *i.e.* eternally unfit for a loving communion with his Father Creator, is indeed a dreadful inheritance to every one who possesses

it; the most dreadful which even Omnipotence could bestow on any creature-being. However difficult, therefore, or even impossible, may be our task to explain satisfactorily the awfully mysterious words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," we must not understand them as teaching that the Divine vengeance will endure for ever. In short, we must accept as truth God's unmistakeable words which assure us that "he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever" (Psalm ciii. 9).

Again, "God is love," and none will deny that through Christ he could as easily save all men as some men, by an outpouring of his Holy Spirit. But according to the traditional belief of the Churches, his love permits him to surrender to eternal torments that exceedingly large majority of our adult race from whom his infinite wisdom pleases to withhold, in this life, his renewing and regenerating grace. For argument, we will say only a half. We ask then, Is it reasonably conceivable that a love which could as easily save all men as some men, but which is content, nevertheless, to leave one half of our ruined race unregenerate, and because unregenerate to agonise for ever in awful torments, could have consented to make such tremendous sacrifices as, humanly speaking, the triune Jehovah has made for the sake of the other half? In our judgment the notion is utterly incongruous. The idea that God is thus intensely affected and moved to the deepest compassion by the contemplation of man's sin and awfully helpless misery, as seen in one portion of our race; and that he is not affected at all—i.e. practically, and so as to impart the needed regenerating influence—by the same facts as seen in another portion, is in our judgment just the opposite of a reasonable belief. To believe this is to believe that in regenerating his elected ones, and thus securing their salvation, his impelling motive is not love, nor any kindred principle, but simply, what we should call in man, caprice. If the captain of the leviathan ship, Great Eastern, in traversing the ocean, approached a

small vessel in a sinking state, crowded with passengers, all of whom he had ample means to rescue, but instead of saving all he selected a few and left the rest to perish, could we say that his impelling principle in this was an inherent kindness or compassion? Would it not be more truthful to say that it was simply whim—humour—caprice? And if, while God imparts to a small minority of a perishing world that regenerating grace which secures their salvation—"Ye must be born again!"—if it were true that he will withhold that same grace eternally from their equally needy and miserable brethren, who, being created fallen, must endure awful sufferings for ever if it be denied to them, could we rightly say that his impartation of it to the few was a demonstration of his inherent benevolence and compassion? That rational faculty with which he has dignified us would not so respond. But happily Scripture and Reason are at one in this matter. For when the infallible word testifies that "the living God is the Saviour especially of those who believe," it affirms also that He "is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10). What man who reverences Holy Writ may rightly doubt this unmistakeable testimony? To doubt it is also to doubt that God is love. To deny that God will regenerate and save all whom he can honourably to himself regenerate and save, rather than suffer them to wail for ever in torments, as the result of the fallen nature in which he was pleased to bring them into being, is, unquestionably, to deny that he is love. Nothing could be more obvious or certain.

That Christ will save all men, is necessarily involved in the fact that it was Jehovah's design that he should do so. When we read that Christ died for all, is it not the Infallible One who informs us that such was his intention? When we read, too, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, is it not the Holy Spirit who announces in these words the intention of the triune Deity? When the Father gave up his beloved Son to the death, the object which he proposed to

himself was that which his inspired word so clearly reveals. It was, that he should be a "ransom for all;" that he should "taste death for every man." In short, it was to accomplish an universal salvation, co-extensive with the fall; the only exceptions being the very few which our Lord himself names, and among whom stands awfully foremost the traitor Apostle, whom he designates the son of perdition, and in whose person the power of God to DESTROY both body and soul in hell, as affirmed by him (Matt. x. 28), will, we doubt not, be literally verified. That it was the Divine object and design that Christ should save, not his elect only, but the world, cannot be denied or questioned, unless we would contradict in direct terms his Apostle John, who writes (1 John iv. 14), "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." That was the testified object, and, this fact being admitted, how decisive is the evidence it supplies that at some period during Christ's mediatorial reign all men will be saved. Surely no reflecting Christian will hesitate to admit that the reign of Christ will not cease until all that Jehovah has designed to accomplish through Christ shall have been fulfilled. It is written, "My counsel shall stand; I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. xlv. 10).

Nevertheless, although Christ died for all—although that was the declared intention of him who cannot be mistaken, thwarted, or disappointed; of him, too, who alone has power to realise that intention, for only he can regenerate and create anew—notwithstanding these undoubted facts, it is a truth equally certain that there are multitudes who are not saved by Christ's atoning death *in this life*. We ask, then, Must we say that God's recorded design in this superlatively important matter will be thwarted, while His alone is the power to make it effectual, His alone the power that has made it effectual hitherto; thwarted simply because not having used that power on earth, in respect of a great multitude too vast to number whom he has suffered to die unregenerate, he will

not please to exert it afterwards!! We ask, Can this be possible? Surely, to this question only one reasonable answer can be given. That which infinite love and unerring wisdom, combined with infinite power, and with a perfect knowledge of all final issues, design to do, is certain—infallibly certain—of accomplishment. The *When* and the *How*, Infinite Wisdom will decide; and we may be sure that both the period and the manner will be such as are best fitted to display the character and perfections—in one word, the glory of God. This conclusion we deem inevitable. We call it necessarily true. To suppose otherwise is to suppose that the God we adore might cease to be God; for it is certain that a God, thwarted or disappointed in his deliberate object and design, is not—cannot be—the omnipotent Jehovah, nor, therefore, the true God. And a God, or even a man, disappointed by reason of the non-accomplishment of something which he always knew would certainly not be!! In what terms might we rightly speak of such an one? Assuredly, everything which God designs to be, will certainly be. Because he knows all futurities with an unerring certainty and exactness, he will not, he cannot have any intention or design which will not be realised. It is enough, therefore, to know that God's intention was that Christ's death should be for all, to be assured that Christ will save all. It is enough to know that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," to be assured that at some period before he resigns his mediatorial kingdom that Saviour will regenerate and save the world. And even if he did not thus foreknow, yet to suppose that death, or the judgment, or any thing else, will prevent the fulfilment of that which the omnipotent Jehovah has intended shall be, and especially of an object, or any portion of an object, so dear to him as that must be for which he has sacrificed his Son, would be to form a very lowering estimate—an estimate manifestly self-refuting—of the Divine character.

We repeat the words, "*any portion of an object*"; for, as

regards the Saviour himself, who "poured out his soul unto death," we ask, Is it not certain that he would by no means consent that that awful sacrifice of himself should leave anything undone which it is fitted to accomplish, and still less which the triune Jehovah, in his infinite wisdom and love, designed it to accomplish. We read that "God is love," and how especially is this truth exemplified in the Divine Son, who consented to surrender his humanity to the agonising death of the Cross as an atonement for human guilt. And can that infinite love which suggested the wondrous scheme of redemption, and thus terribly carried it out, be content that only a fraction of the great work it was so especially fitted and absolutely designed to do should be accomplished, and that the great bulk of our fallen race, except infants, should after all be unsaved? Can it be true that it is in reference only to a fraction of the work which the Son of God left heaven to accomplish that his inspired word affirms, "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied"? Surely to this question our entire reasonable and moral nature can respond only in an emphatic—No.

Further, if Christ's redemption will not save all, how inexplicable is the fact that the Holy Spirit who inspired the New Testament writers should have caused them to express themselves as they have done. For they have published to the world, and thus—may we not believe?—to Angels as well as to men (for we know Satan has quoted Scripture), that God's design was that Christ should be the Saviour of all men, while nevertheless he who inspired them knew that that design would not be realised! We are taught, and correctly, that God's highest end is his own glory. But to publish that God had intentions which the result will prove to be abortive; surely this could not be for his glory!

Should we be told that it is man's non-acceptance of Christ's salvation that defeats God's purpose of love, we would remind the objector that fallen man ever was, and ever

will be, spiritually dead, and therefore practically deaf to all God's gracious calls and invitations, until quickened by God himself into spiritual life; and that the only reason that his published offer of salvation through Christ has in any case whatever, now or in past times, been responded to and cordially accepted, is that the sinner has been thus spiritually quickened in conformity with the inspired words of the Psalmist, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psalm cx. 3), also of St. Paul, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1). This fact is very decisively affirmed by our Lord, when he says, "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44). No Christian theologist will refuse assent to the following propositions, viz., that all that ever was needed through the past, or that ever will be needed in the future, to make certain the salvation of all men universally, is such an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon each and all of our fallen race as is promised to the Jews at a period still future, and of which we read (Heb. viii. 10, 11), viz., "This is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least unto the greatest." In the absence of this holy influence, this gracious exercise of the divine power, what numerous generations of Jews have lived and died unregenerate, "denying the Lord who bought them;" and as regards mankind generally from the days of Adam until now, how decisive is the evidence we possess that the great bulk of them have also lived and died unregenerate, and that they will continue to do so until that promised millennial period when God will thus remarkably interpose. Seeing then that the power is ever with God, and with him only, to secure the fulfilment of his own gracious designs, and that his infinite wisdom can alone



determine the time and the manner; seeing also that his unerring word affirms that he "will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" also that he is "the Saviour of all men"; is it not reasonable to believe, or rather is it not our *bounden duty* to believe that this inestimable boon, this universal salvation through Christ, of which his word assures us in so many texts, is not a mere shadow, whose substance shall never be realised, but an assured truth, a glorious reality, postponed only to be yet testified to a rejoicing universe at such time and in such manner as his infinite wisdom sees shall most redound to his glory. Thus we see a high meaning in St. Paul's words when he writes (Rom. xi. 32), "For God hath concluded them all [*i. e.* both Jews and Gentiles] in unbelief," or, as we read in the margin, hath *shut them all up together* in unbelief, "that he might have mercy upon all"; by which we understand that his universal mercy—his mercy to all—might be finally manifested, to his eternal glory. And having given this and other unmistakeable testimony relative to the salvation finally of all, both Jews and Gentiles, he exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"; "for of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever." Thus Scripture harmonises with Scripture. Jesus Christ "is the propitiation, not for our sins only, *but also for the sins of the whole world*" (John ii. 2).

In this future salvation it is obvious that no one on earth can have any part to act. This sufficiently explains why, in announcing in many texts, though in varying terms, that God will have all men to be saved, the Holy Scriptures give no particulars regarding it. The Bible does not profess to give information to gratify men's aspirations to be wise before God's time. Just as the Jewish Scriptures only faintly shadowed forth truths of high importance, which are now seen as in the sun-light, so the New Testament Scriptures may not be expected to reveal to us with exactness, or free

from obscurity, truths not essential to our salvation in this life, and which belong only to that future period of Messiah's reign which shall terminate in the delivering up of his mediatorial kingdom to the Father. We know how our Lord answered the question of Peter concerning John "And what shall this man do?" There is only one salvation which demands our activities, viz., that which is initiated on earth. It is the salvation of the Elect, who are honoured by God to be co-workers with him therein, and required to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling," remembering that "it is God who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We know his course of procedure in this salvation, and what is required of its subjects; for his Scriptures very fully inform us. But we must not conclude that the procedure which, humanly speaking, he happens to adopt is therefore the only course open to him. Who may doubt that had it so pleased God he might, *through Christ*, have saved our entire race—Adam and Eve alone excepted—from even a first and earthly death, as he did Enoch and Elijah, and as he will save the myriads of saints who shall finally meet Christ in the air (1 Thes. iv. 17). We except our first Parents, because to Adam and through him also to Eve the words were addressed, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and natural death is a meet adjunct or a meet consequent of that spiritual death which was immediate and which we believe these words announce. Nor, on the other hand, may we doubt that He who alone fixes the times and the seasons might have postponed the salvation of every human soul until after the judgment, and that awful second death, by his penal fire, which shall follow the judgment. If the reader demur to this we ask him, Why not? If he say that man being already redeemed and the cost of his ransom paid in full his actual salvation could not be thus postponed, we again ask, Why not? Does he mean that there can be *no* postponement? He cannot say this, for we know

there is postponement. It is universal. No man is saved until God regenerates him and impresses on him his own moral stamp and character. Until this is done all men are wicked in the sight of God, notwithstanding their redemption by Christ; and even though socially virtuous, as was the young Ruler of whom we read (Matt. ix. 16). This is true of the elect in common with others, some of whom revel in wickedness until God converts them. The fact therefore that Christ has secured salvation for all men decides nothing as to the time when each one shall have the benefit of it; nor whether it shall be in this world or not until after the judgment. This rests entirely with God. He has great objects to accomplish, and in all things his highest end is necessarily his own glory. For this reason he bears with men's wickedness before their conversion, and often subjects them to much trial and suffering *after* he imparts his regenerating grace. As in surrendering his beloved Son to die for a world's salvation, his design was to display, as in a constellation of eternal brilliance, all his infinite perfections, so in subjecting our entire sinful race—each and every one, though already redeemed—to more or less of suffering, and finally to death, it is, we believe, primarily, to display some one or more of those perfections; their sufferings, like those of the divine Redeemer, being thus made subservient to his glory. We read (John xxi. 19), "This spake Jesus, signifying by what death he (Peter) should *glorify* God." And we can scarcely suppose physical agonies more severe than were those to which many of his most loved ones were subjected in death; his Son, by crucifixion; and the martyrs, some by fire, and some were sawn asunder.

If this view be truth—and we think every intelligent Christian will assent to it—do we not see therein a sufficient reason why, with regard to the great bulk of our sinful race, pardon and salvation should be postponed until after the judgment and the second death. God is love. He wills to

save (1 Tim. ii. 4), but he wills also, chiefly and antecedently, that his own great name be exalted in the manifestation of his high perfections; not only of his exceeding greatness and his power, nor even of his love combined with these, but also of his terribleness; that his entire rational creation may stand in a deeply reverential awe of him; and most especially that the great truth may be impressed deeply, vividly and eternally upon all creature intelligences, that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God. "The Lord most high is terrible" (Ps. xlvii. 2). Even to our reason, feeble though it be, this awful display seems a fit antecedent to an eternal loving communion of creature beings with the very awful God of love.

But we shall be asked how—if the several texts quoted must be understood literally as teaching an universal salvation—how do we explain literally that other very important text which is still in abeyance, viz., "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Suffer a few further observations and we will answer this question. We have already remarked that that text, or rather its words "everlasting punishment," are deeply mysterious. The Churches do not profess so to view it. They think the meaning obvious, and that whatever of doubtful meaning, involving mystery, exists, is not in that text, or in any text of that class, but solely in the texts which seem to teach the opposite—*i. e.* which teach so clearly Christ's universal salvation. As regards these latter, they deem all expedients lawful to get rid of their natural meaning, as we have so fully seen under the figure of a jury deciding on the evidence of witnesses. Clearly, therefore, they could not rightly object, were we to treat in like manner the text which announces an everlasting punishment, and any other texts which seem like it. But a solution so obtained is literally good for nothing. If unable to solve the mystery without the use of that skill which consists in evading, or neutralising, the natural and literal meaning of words or

sentences which are obviously not figurative, we are content to leave it unsolved. Surely, it were better to remain in darkness on any scriptural problem, *and confess that darkness*, than thus to profess to solve it. Until we can see that God's infliction hereafter, on unregenerate men, of what is truly and literally an everlasting punishment, is compatible with his being truly and literally the Saviour of all men, we cannot give an absolutely intelligent credence to the announcement he has made that he is so, nor to his many other announcements to the same effect. But credence simply—not an absolutely intelligent credence—is that which is imperative when the Most High speaks to us. If the subject matter be mysterious, or the revelations appear contradictory, we cannot believe intelligently—we mean, so as perfectly to satisfy our reason—without the requisite light, which God may supply either directly or through others; or, he may withhold it. But we can believe in the dark, and do so believe, in many things natural as well as spiritual.

How awful is the question before us! The final supreme happiness of our brethren and sisters of mankind universally, or the highest conceivable suffering through a literal eternity of the great bulk of them, including, it may be, many who have been our personal friends, and some our nearest and very dear relatives. On a subject so momentous, which, next to his personal salvation, is of the highest possible importance to every Christian man, we must not be content with a credence which ignores either of the seemingly conflicting statements of Scripture. If we possess not the requisite light to believe God's revelations intelligently, we must content ourselves to believe them in the dark. We must not suffer the revelations of his love—the love which provided a Saviour for our entire ruined world—to be nullified in our faith by the announcements of his vengeance; nor *vice-versa*. Each will have its own proper fulfilment. If we cannot see their mutual agreement, or, to speak more exactly, their non-disagreement, we must tolerate

the gloom, and wait heaven's final enlightenment. Unquestionably, it is trying to faith to believe in the dark. To have a conception clear and exact in things of high moment is felt as a necessity. The Jews realised this feeling. Their Scriptures revealed to them a Saviour in the two-fold aspect of a mighty prince and potentate; and of a deeply humiliated sufferer. How incongruous! They could not believe in opposites. They accepted one aspect, and ignored the other. Thus all was clear. A one-sided credence saved them from perplexity. But did it land them in the truth? We know the sad reverse.

It cannot be denied that some of the most prominent Scripture testimonies regarding the salvation and the perdition of mankind, seem directly opposed to each other. We read that "He that believeth not shall be damned." We read also, that all to whom the Supreme Judge will finally address the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed," "shall go away into everlasting punishment." We read these very awful announcements, on the one hand. They are expressed in words which seem incapable of any but one meaning. But what do we read on the other hand? We read in one Scripture that "the living God is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10); and in another, that He "will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4). We read, too, that Christ "died for all" (2 Cor. v. 15); also, that He "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6); and our Lord himself affirms that He "will draw all men unto him" (John xii. 32). Who may rightly deny that the teachings of these two classes of texts seem irreconcilably opposed? What, then, ought Christian men to do? We know what the Deist would say they should do. He would say, You must reject them altogether as unworthy of your credence. But we cannot do this. They are God's unerring word. Therefore, no matter how seemingly opposed, we are sure there is truth in each and all of them, and that, sooner or later, all men will be privileged to see that truth. Meanwhile, the texts

quoted clearly reveal that a very large portion of mankind will be damned. But they reveal, with equal clearness, that all mankind will be saved. Unquestionably, it is hard to believe implicitly these very remarkable affirmations, which seem so directly opposed to each other ; but our authority for so believing is that Divine word, of which we read that it "liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 28). We should distrust our understanding when it refuses to accept the literal meaning of Scripture texts which are neither prophetic nor figurative. We ought to feel convinced that we do not see accurately the truth they teach.

It has been already intimated that our Lord's words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," were, to the Author, until comparatively recent years, the greatest and most confounding, as well as the most awful of all mysteries. God good to all—his nature love—his power infinite—his knowledge of all issues perfect—his freedom absolute, to create or not to create—his deciding to create—and, nevertheless, an eternity of awful suffering the final issue, in the case of many thousands of millions of men and women whom he is pleased to bring into being, through parents who had sinned against him ; that final issue being eternally foreknown in all its exactness by his infinite mind !! This was, to the Author, an overwhelming mystery. And if the awful words, "everlasting punishment," were susceptible of only one literal interpretation—if their only literal meaning were eternal torment or suffering, the mystery would still be to him as overwhelming as ever.

But, we rejoice to say, it is not in vain—at least as regards our own conviction—that our thoughts have been so strongly and so continuously directed to this most awful of all awful subjects. A simple thought, accidental as it may seem, may throw a flood of light upon what seemed before an impenetrable mystery. We are told, it was the sight of an apple falling to the ground from the branch on which it hung, that

suggested to the mind of Newton the notion of an universal gravitation, upon which he built so successfully his theory of the visible heavens. The thought which has served the Author as a key to unlock the mystery of our Lord's words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," and through the truth—as he conceives it to be—thus manifested, to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable texts we have quoted; this thought, so valuable, as he deems it, was suggested by two very remarkable inspired utterances, viz., one of our Lord (Luke xx. 35), and one of St. Paul (Phil. iii. 11). In the former we read, "They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, *and the resurrection from the dead.*" In the latter, St. Paul writes, "If, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of [from\*] the dead. On reading these two portions of Holy Writ, at different times—portions which he had many times read before without any special impression—the thought flashed upon him, Then certainly, in the mind of our Lord, and equally in that of his Apostle, the resurrection from the dead will not be an universal attainment; all persons will not realise it, or the one would not speak of a class of persons who shall be accounted worthy to obtain it, nor would the other utter the extraordinary words, "If, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead." Certainly, these are remarkable utterances. Had Holy Writ contained only one of them, we might, perhaps, have passed it over as a peculiar phraseology, having no very special significance. But words so remarkable having been used, both by our Lord and an Apostle, we may not rightly thus pass them by. Evidently they have a special meaning. What is it? The eternal life of the raised bodies of the righteous, contrasted with the final loss and forfeiture of the same by the wicked, is the thought which these texts naturally suggest. We ask, then, Is not this natural thought the

\* The Greek critics, Alford and Tischendorf, give "*from the dead,*" not "*of the dead,*" as the true rendering.



true thought? A forfeiture which will be eternal is an eternal penalty. To a human spirit destined for immortality, the forfeiture for ever of the body to which it was originally united, and from which it has become finally severed in punishment by reason of sin, is obviously an everlasting punishment. We believe, because we find ourselves both scripturally and morally compelled to believe, that this is the "everlasting punishment" which our Lord announces, Matt. xxv. 46. It is the everlasting loss of the body in God's penal fire. Also, in this final destruction his words will be verified, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

The harmony of Scripture, and the moral character of God, both of which are impugned by the popular conception of the everlasting punishment, unite to make our acceptance of this natural interpretation imperative. If we adopt the popular interpretation as the true meaning, we do two things, each of which suffices to prove our choice a very serious error. First, we contradict, in direct terms, some of the plainest and most important affirmations of Scripture, viz., every one of the numerous texts which declare the universality of Christ's redemption. Next, we impeach the moral character of God. We have already supplied proof of these allegations, and shall do so yet more fully. Evidently, the interpretation which does these things, or either of them, deeply dishonours God. This fact should suffice to satisfy us that it cannot be the true meaning of our Lord's words, "everlasting punishment." Therefore, the other interpretation alone remains to us. We are shut up to it—*i. e.* we are shut up to an interpretation which harmonises all the seeming discords of Scripture on this most important subject. Destruction, or its synonyme perdition, is the term which our Lord and his Apostles alike employ to describe the final punishment which awaits unrepentant sinners. The former uses it once, viz., Matt. vii. 13; the latter use it nine times, viz., Rom. ix. 22, Phil. i. 28 and iii. 19, 2 Thes. i. 9, 1 Tim. vi. 9, Heb. x. 39, and 2 Pet. ii. 1,

iii. 7, and iii. 16. The severance of body and spirit until the resurrection is the temporary destruction of the man. Their severance in the second death will be their severance for ever—*i. e.* the everlasting destruction of the man. Thus, *in their persons as men*, all who die unregenerate will be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thes. i. 9).

That there will be no permanent restoration of the bodies of the unregenerate is confirmed virtually, and, we think, obviously, by the very noticeable words of our Lord, which he repeats three times in John vi. We mean the words, “and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Verse 40, we read, “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, *and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

44, “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; *and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

54, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; *and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

In these texts, eternal life is assured to the individual, or character, described therein; and in each the same words are added, “and I will raise him up at the last day.”

How remarkable are these added words, and how especially noticeable is their triple repetition! Surely, they must have a special meaning. They cannot mean simply that at the last day these notable ones shall be raised again like all the rest of mankind. They must mean infinitely more than this, or our Lord would not have thus emphatically uttered and repeated them. We cannot, therefore, doubt that in using those words his design was to teach, positively and directly, the same truth which he taught indirectly when he said, “But they who shall be accounted worthy *to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead*”; also which St. Paul taught, when he wrote, “if, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.” They intimate, unmistakeably, that none others

shall be thus privileged ; none others shall realise the eternal life of the body, conjointly with that of the spirit.

Thus Scripture is seen to harmonise with Scripture.

But we may be asked, What then means the text (Acts xxiv. 15) which says, "There shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust" ? Does not this text seem to contradict the two texts which teach that "the resurrection from the dead" shall be limited to a class of persons who "shall be accounted worthy to obtain" it ? We answer, There will be two resurrections ; 1 Thes. iv. 16, we read, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," but only one of them is called in scripture, **THE** resurrection of the dead. The other is called simply **A** resurrection. Only the former will be a permanent restoration. Our Lord calls this, "the resurrection of life" (John v. 29). The raised body will live for ever. He calls the other, "the resurrection of damnation," *i. e.* of condemnation. It involves an inevitable destruction, as shewn in the ten texts we have named. It is a merely temporary restoration, and for a temporary but very awful purpose. It will bring before the sovereign Judge, in the case of each unregenerate individual, the same body with all its corrupt tendencies, and the same morally corrupt spirit, which were united on earth, as testified in the Apocalypse (Rev. xxii. 11), "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still ;" a resurrection for the one and only purpose, as regards its subjects, that they may receive from Him, in the presence of his intelligent Universe, the terrible sentence "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Let this distinction be duly noted as to the character of the two resurrections, and we can well understand why the resurrection of the dead spoken of in the two texts [quoted page 48], also in 1 Cor. xv., where it is so fully described by St. Paul, means only the resurrection of the righteous. Only the righteous, *i. e.* those whom God recognises as righteous by reason of the righteousness of

Christ imputed to them through the faith which unites to him on earth, shall realise that permanent restoration of the body which our Lord and his Apostle designate "THE resurrection from the dead."

The terms "everlasting fire" and "eternal fire" are synonymous. We find them used in the New Testament to designate God's penal fire. The former is so employed by our Lord in the text just quoted (Matt. xxv. 46); the latter in Jude 7. Two reasons satisfy us why it is so called; one, that it is the fire of the eternal or everlasting one; the other, that it never ceases till its work is completed, viz., the destruction, literal and final, of that on which it acts, equally whether it be a city devoted to destruction, or the persons of men. For one or both of these reasons the fire which consumed Sodom—and which we know is not now burning—is called "eternal fire." By the words "everlasting fire" we understand therefore simply God's penal fire. It is therefore our conviction that the bodies of all who die unregenerate—not born again—will be literally and for ever destroyed in that fire, and that this destruction is the second death of which we read, Rev. xxi. 8. This interpretation also is necessary to the literal truth of the word *death*, as there used. To interpret this word as used in Scripture to mean an everlasting existence in misery, is not only to interpret falsely, but it is obviously absurd. Until rightly understood, it ought to have been accepted as a mystery. In that awful fire the doomed ones will lose for ever their humanity. They will no longer be clothed with the bodies they now possess. Such as they were from death to the judgment, i. e. disembodied human spirits, such after their second death they will remain for ever. In their persons as men, they will be punished with "everlasting destruction;" while the saints, i. e. the elect, whom our Lord designates "the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 36), will be eternally clothed with the body in which they dwelt on earth, transformed from the natural into

the spiritual, and fashioned in glory and beauty after that of their divine Lord. In their bodies immortalised equally as their spirits, they will realise that eternal life which is the Saviour's gift (John x. 28; xvii. 2, and vi. 40, 44, 54). This, we believe, is the scriptural meaning of our Lord's very awful two-fold adjudication, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

We repeat that Judas Iscariot, and those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost, will, we doubt not, be subjected to that retributive power of God of which our Lord speaks (Matt. x. 28), viz., his power to destroy both body and soul in hell. We know that Judas is called in Scripture, "the son of perdition"; and who may doubt that God, who foreknew with exactness the history of each and all of these and what their end would be before he created them, had reasons approved by his infinite wisdom for bringing them into being. As the builder casts away his scaffolding when the building is completed, so the great Master Builder, when the innumerable company of his redeemed shall be finally built up a holy temple unto the Lord, will cast away Judas and others, who, like him, were used only as a temporary scaffolding in its erection, and consign them, not to an eternal torment—"for his mercy endureth for ever"—but to that nonentity from which he had caused them for a season to emerge; a nonentity which, having been preceded by a rational life, seems fitly called by St. Peter (2. ii. 17) "the mist of darkness," and by St. Jude (18) "the blackness of darkness for ever." Their final will be just as was their primeval state. They sprang from nonentity, and, after having accomplished their Creator's purposes in that disobedience "whereunto also they were appointed"—1 Pet. ii. 8—to nonentity they will return.

No Christian man will affirm that our Lord taught two different doctrines regarding the final destiny of the wicked. When in one text he calls it "destruction," and in another

"everlasting punishment," it is certain his meaning is the same. We refer to the text, "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction," and to the text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." The words differ, but not our Lord's meaning in using them. The words, "everlasting punishment," are open to two interpretations, but only one interpretation is possible to the term "destruction." It involves, of necessity, a *ceasing to be*. And destruction is one of the two possible meanings of the words "everlasting punishment." The other meaning is, an eternal torment; but this could not be destruction. Clearly, therefore, an eternal torment cannot be our Lord's meaning. Destruction is the direct opposite of existence, and cannot, therefore, mean an eternal existence in misery. Obviously, therefore, the true meaning of our Lord's words, "everlasting punishment," is destruction: a destruction from which there will be no resurrection. It is the destruction for ever of the man, as a man; the irrevocable destruction of his body, which would otherwise live for ever, a glorious spiritual body, but from which his rational spirit is now eternally severed by reason of sin. This is an eternal punishment, as truly as an eternal torment is so, though of a very different kind. The one involves the existence for ever of the united body and spirit in awful suffering; the other, the literal and eternal death of the body, in fulfilment of the Divine decree, "The wages of sin is death." This is the final destiny of the wicked. Our Lord contrasts it with life, when he says, "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." His preceding words are, "Wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matt. vii. 13, 14). This literal destruction is reserved for the finally impenitent—*i. e.* for those to whom God, in his sovereign wisdom, does not please in this life to "grant repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18). It will be their everlasting punishment.

The terms used by the Apostolic writers confirm this expo-

sition, as we have already seen. And, in using those terms, they mean what they say. When St. Paul writes of "hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. vi. 9), and when St. Peter writes of "the perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. iii. 7), they do not unadvisedly or carelessly mislead their readers by writing perdition and destruction, when the thing they mean is a direct opposite of destruction, viz., an existence too terrible to think of; an everlasting existence in the excruciating fires of Gehenna. But Christian Churches through the past have averred it to be so, and present Churches still aver that it is so; and in these opposite statements, upon a subject of infinite moment, we see at one view, "The Churches *versus* the Bible," and "The Bible *versus* the Churches."

We quote a few other texts in illustration. We accept in its literal sense the destruction affirmed in the following. It is—we think, obviously—the destruction of the humanity—the living person—often called in Scripture *soul*, viz. (Acts iii. 23), "And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet (Christ) shall be destroyed:" also (1 Cor. iii. 17), "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy:" also (2 Pet. ii. 12), "But these as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, shall utterly perish in their own corruption." How clearly does this text teach the destruction of their body. Also (Phil. iii. 18, 19), "They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction." If an inspired commentator should tell us that the words "destroy," and "destruction" in these texts, and in others too numerous to quote, must not be understood literally, but as meaning something different, we should of course, though much perplexed, bow to his teaching. But when uninspired men say this, we say simply, *No*; had something essentially different been intended by Him who inspired the writers, different words would have been used. We accept the words therefore in their true meaning. We view them as

though the writers had said, "The doom of these persons is destruction. It shall commence in the first death and be eternalised in the second. They shall not 'obtain the resurrection from the dead.'"

Again, How decisive are the words of the Psalmist, and how literal will be their fulfilment (Ps. xcii. 7), "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever"; also (Ps. cxlv. 20), "All the wicked will he destroy." We repeat, How can the words, *destroy* and *destroyed*, be understood in these texts otherwise than literally? If something essentially different were the truth, surely these words would not have been used. If the wicked are preserved through eternity, myriads of myriads of them, still wicked, unchanged in character, and, although enduring awful suffering, still existing as men, how can it be truly said that the wicked shall be destroyed for ever? Instead of destroyed they are immortalised, both in their persons and in their character; an eternal record and monument of the likeness of the Great Eternal to earthly monarchs, in his powerlessness to regenerate his subjects, and to mould their character to his wishes; a monument of his powerlessness to recover them from the awful state in which he is pleased daily, through continuous thousands of years, to bring them into being! An eternal record, too, of the non-fulfilment of his published word, which affirms that he is the Saviour of all men, and that he will have all men to be saved; also of his failure to accomplish his most cherished design, which, although foreknowing the failure, he has nevertheless placed on record; for we read (1 John iv. 14), "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." The wicked immortalised in their persons and in their character, and God's word, which affirms their final destruction, falsified! What a strange monument this to the glory of God!!

But the unerring Word says of the wicked, "They shall be



destroyed for ever." These words cannot be mistaken. Destroyed first in their persons, it only remains that they be destroyed also in their character—the unregenerate character of their rational spirits. This two-fold destruction accomplished, how literally are the words of Scripture verified, "All the wicked will he destroy." And their redemption by Christ secures this latter destruction. When he interposes to save them; when he claims the immortal spirits of the unnumbered myriads who have died unregenerate as the vast remainder of his mediatorial purchase—that purchase of which his elected ones are the first fruits; he puts forth in their behalf, just as he does in behalf of every sinner whom he saves on earth, his power as a Prince and a Saviour—that power with which, in the divine scheme of redemption, he is officially invested—to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. These realised, sanctification follows. Transformed from wicked to righteous by God's regenerating and sanctifying grace, the words of the inspired Psalmist are literally and gloriously verified, "All the wicked will he destroy."

Should an objector say in demur, These words are words of vengeance; it is, therefore, unreasonable to suppose them to include a blessing, and especially the highest of all blessings, viz., a transformation of character which will fit them for heaven; we reply, Without this highest of all blessings the text cannot be verified. Certainly, to destroy the bodies of wicked men would not be to destroy the wicked, while their unrenewed rational spirits still live. But we read, "All the wicked will he destroy." Vengeance having done its work in the destruction of their bodies, how well and how beautifully does this latter destruction accord with the character of a God who is love. Whether the Psalmist understood the full import of the terms he employed, we cannot know. But the words are not his. They are those of the Holy One who inspired him. Thus we see how two texts which seem absolutely to contradict each other are simultaneously verified,

"The living God is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10), and, "All the wicked will he destroy" (Ps. cxlv. 20). Thus delightfully Scripture is harmonised; and we recognise the truth that "the doctrinal teachings of Scripture, which seem opposed to each other, are accurately understood only in so far as their harmony is seen."

We know the Churches do not believe in the salvation after death of any one who dies unregenerate. If they could believe this of one, they could believe it of all who so die. We know the common belief of Evangelical Churches is, that the everlasting punishment which the judgment will award will be an eternity of awful suffering to all who die unregenerate—not born again—*i. e.* to the great bulk of all the men and women who have ever lived. But, because the preceding Scripture testimonies, or, if our opponents please so to designate them, our interpretations of the Scripture testimonies, are opposed to the common belief, we ask, Must they therefore of necessity be erroneous? What is the test of truth in this matter? Is the common belief the test? Even those who hold it will not say that. Assuredly, Holy Writ is the test, the only test. Let the opposed beliefs be brought to this test. Our belief is before the reader. It is based on the natural and literal meaning of all the texts involved in the controversy. Also, it removes their apparent discordance. In these two matters, each so obviously important, it differs essentially from the traditional creed of the Churches. It brings our Lord's teaching of an everlasting punishment into harmony with the many Scriptures which teach that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and that he died for all. Let the common belief be brought to the same test. Those who hold it say that the everlasting punishment will be an everlasting agony or suffering. We ask, then, How do they harmonise with this these unmistakeable words of St. Paul, "The living God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe"? They don't attempt to harmonise them. They tell us plainly, "The

living God is *not* the Saviour of all men, but *only* of those who believe." They say, This is very clearly taught in other Scriptures, and we are sure St. Paul cannot mean anything different. Thus they ignore the Apostle's teaching, and in this most important matter they hold a faith which is its direct opposite. But the Apostle's teaching is the Holy Spirit's teaching. To us, therefore, it is simply a question of whom we ought to believe—the Holy Spirit, who affirms that "the living God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe," or Christian Churches, which insist that he is not the Saviour of all men, but *ONLY* of those who believe. Many other texts might be in like manner contrasted with the traditional faith of the Churches, in this matter of deepest moment. We say, *of deepest moment*; for if the salvation of one million or one billion of men be a matter of deep moment, then certainly, and obviously, the salvation of ten millions or billions must be of ten times deeper moment; and if all souls are of equal value, the salvation finally of the innumerable millions who die unregenerate is incomparably more important than is the salvation of the very few comparatively whom God regenerates in this life.

It is a truth which it is ever important to remember that no portion of God's word can be rightly quoted to show that some other portion of the same unerring word is nullified thereby. The many texts we have quoted which teach Christ's universal salvation will all be verified. We may not doubt that. He who doubts it after due reflection cannot rightly say that he believes unreservedly in Holy Writ. His faith amounts simply to this. He believes the things he pleases to believe, and he rejects the things he pleases to reject. Each of these texts testifies in its own terms that Christ is the Saviour, not merely of a portion of mankind, but the Saviour of all men; the Saviour of the world. A traditional Christianity teaches that every one of them is heterodox as it stands. It needs man's discriminating wisdom to rectify it—*e. g.*

our Lord says, "I will draw all men unto me." Evangelical Christians reject the words "all men." They don't believe in them. They say all classes of men, *i. e. some* men of all classes, is the true meaning. Instead of allowing the written word to rectify their opinion, they employ their opinion to rectify the written word. Until thus rectified they cannot believe its testimony. They create a testimony of their own, to which they give their faith. Yet they are profoundly satisfied that they believe implicitly in Holy Writ. We accept the record as it stands. Our Lord himself informs us that God sent his Son into the world "that the *world* through him might be saved" (John iii. 17). We may therefore safely rest assured that he who is "mighty to save" will not deliver up his mediatorial kingdom until he has fully and perfectly accomplished his mission. He will not withdraw from that mission when it is only very partially executed. Though a perfect success in reference to his comparatively few elected ones, yet, while as regards the great world which he affirms he came to save it seems to be an awful failure, he will not withdraw from it. Surely we can believe this. Surely we ought to believe it. He will therefore claim these immortal spirits now a second time disembodied. And when he claims he will regenerate them, and sanctify them, as truly as he does regenerate and sanctify all whom he claims on earth. Christ has redeemed all mankind, and for this reason he will claim all mankind. The infallible Word declares that he "will have all men to be saved;" and our Lord has said, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me;" also, he has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Surely, then, we may not rightly doubt that a Saviour, whose love and compassion were great enough to cause him to come down from heaven to earth, to agonise and die for fallen men's redemption, and who has himself declared, "I came to save the *world*" (John xii. 47), will finally claim and save the *world*; even all whom he came to redeem.

We perceive that when the Scripture texts which refer to the subject are harmonised they teach two salvations. But one of the texts on which we have just remarked does this of itself, and in terms which exclude all reasonable doubt, viz. "The living God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." With one and the same salvation for all the saved, and so as to exclude a difference, this text could not be intelligibly verified. With two salvations—one of the elect including the body, and another of the non-elect excluding the body—this Scripture is literally verified. He is the Saviour of all men, but especially of those who believe. Also, with two salvations as above, the latter being realised only after the final destruction of the body in God's penal fire, the New Testament is a self-consistent book. But with only one salvation limited to the comparatively few, called in Scripture God's elect, and with the great bulk of adult mankind condemned to eternal torments, the New Testament abounds with statements which cannot be harmonised. We believe, therefore, in two salvations; one of the elect, and another of the non-elect. That there will be a salvation of some who are certainly not God's elect, is clearly shown 1 Cor. iii. 15, on which text we shall remark hereafter.

Possibly, some persons may object, This is a new interpretation of Scripture: it cannot, therefore, be true: the New Testament has been the text-book of the Churches through almost eighteen centuries: had the views which this writer propounds been truth, they would have been recognised by the Churches either from the first or certainly very many centuries ago. In reply, we may quote the excellent Scott, who, as a faithful and able commentator and sound divine, is universally respected. No opinion on the question thus suggested can better deserve attention than his. In commenting on the passage containing the words, "A light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke ii. 32), he introduces the commentator Whitby, who writes, "It is wonderful, after so many clear prophecies in the Old Testament of the calling of the

Gentiles, that the Jews should have been all so blind as to imagine that God had no kindness for them." Scott remarks on this quotation as follows: "It is likewise worth inquiring in this view, how far the bulk of professed Christians also may be blinded by prejudice concerning many things as plainly revealed in the New Testament." The worthy commentator is right, though himself involved in the prejudice. "The bulk of professed Christians" *are* thus blinded, and in a manner strictly analogous.

We shew the analogy thus. As remarked in a preceding page, the prophets revealed their Messiah to the Jews in two very opposite characters. They revealed him as a mighty Prince, and as a deeply humiliated sufferer. Instead of accepting as truth both of these revelations—which we know they ought to have done, notwithstanding the incomprehensible mystery which their oppositeness created—it pleased the Jews to accept only one of them as truth, and to reject, very determinedly, the other. And how exact is the parallel! After his advent, our Lord revealed himself in two very opposite characters. He revealed himself as the Saviour of the *world*; he affirms that he came to save the *world*, that he will give his flesh for the life of the *world*, and that he will draw *all* men unto him. But he revealed himself also as the condemning Judge of the world—*i. e.* the Judge who will finally condemn to an everlasting punishment the great bulk of the world, even all who live and die unregenerate—not "born again." These opposites are difficult to understand; and, in exact imitation of the Jews, Christian men make short work of the mystery. They accept as truth only one of these revelations, and determinedly reject the other. They firmly believe that the great bulk of the world dying unregenerate will be subjected to an everlasting punishment; but, with equal firmness, they reject the revelation that Christ is the Saviour of *all* men, and deny that he will indeed save *the world*. We repeat, Though our Lord affirms that he will draw *all* men

unto him, they disbelieve that he will do so. This most delightful revelation, confirmed by so many other texts, is too good to be literally true; too good, we mean, for their faith. In reference to it, words like those of St. Paul are, we think, applicable to Christian men, just as the original words were to the Jews in reference to their Messiah. 2 Cor. iii. 15, we read, "Even unto this day when Moses is read the veil is upon their heart." In like manner, may we not say, "Even unto this day when the Gospel is read—Christ 'the Saviour of *all* men,' the 'Saviour of *the world*'—the veil is upon the heart of Christian men." They disbelieve this revelation, equally as the Jews have disbelieved that their Messiah would be a despised and rejected one. The fault is of the same character in the Christian Church as it was, and is still, in the Jewish Synagogue. It is a refusal to accept the plainly-written Scripture testimony; a refusal to believe it simply because certain other inspired announcements *seem* to discredit it. For the rejection, *for this cause*, of a most important Scripture revelation, Christian men have a very notable example in the Jews, and they have not scrupled to follow it.

We feel bold to say, however, that with the New Testament as their text-book through almost eighteen centuries, as just remarked, this continuous disbelief of our Lord's unmis-takeable words, "I came to save the world," also, "I will draw all men unto me," ought not to exist now in the Christian Church. The fact that He also uses words which seem to teach the opposite, is no sufficient reason why we should believe the one testimony and reject the other. If, while preserving the literal meaning of the words he employs, we can so explain as to remove the seeming discordance, that explanation is at least the probable truth; and if no other harmonised explanation be possible, it is the unquestionable truth, and as such binds our faith. Christian men have no more right than the Jews had, or now have, to reject a clearly-revealed Scripture testimony because another exists

which seems opposed to it. We should take warning from them, and remember, as we have already remarked, that no portion of God's Word can be rightly quoted to show that some other portion of the same unerring Word is nullified thereby. Each, no matter how seemingly opposed to the other, will have its own proper fulfilment.

We repeat, in brief, our preceding quotation from Scott, as a suitable close to this Chapter. "It is worth inquiring how far the bulk of professed Christians may be blinded by prejudice concerning many things plainly revealed in the New Testament."

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We append the following observations:—

In this Chapter we have given scriptural evidence, which we think will be found incontrovertible, that the everlasting punishment of the wicked announced by our Lord, will be the loss, final and irretrievable, of their bodies raised at the resurrection. If this be a mere fancy or delusion, it is, of course, worthless; but if it be indeed the thing we affirm, viz. a truth, certainly and unmistakeably taught by our Lord and his Apostle Paul, though so indirectly as to have escaped the notice of the Churches, it is, both in itself and in the very important revelations of Holy Writ which it opens to our view, a discovery whose value it exceeds our power to estimate. It is so in itself; for what benevolent man, who believes in an eternal torment, *can adequately estimate* a discovered teaching of Scripture, which satisfies him that the destruction of the body restored at the resurrection (a destruction which will be its eternal forfeiture), *is the true "everlasting punishment" of Scripture*, and that, consequently, not one of his brethren and sisters of mankind, whom God commands him



while on earth to love as himself, will be subjected to the unspeakably horrible infliction of an eternal torment? And its value is equally great in the glorious revelations of Scripture, which, hitherto clouded in a darkness which has seemed impenetrable, it opens to our view. For when the dark cloud has been removed therefrom which our belief of an eternal torment interposes, the literal truth is seen of the numerous Scripture texts which testify so clearly and in varied phrase, that "the living God is the Saviour of *all* men," and and that he "will have *all* men to be saved." This glorious revelation, no longer nullified in men's conceptions by one or two misunderstood teachings of our Lord, will be recognised in all the fulness of its meaning as God's unerring truth. To parents, who mourn as those "who have no hope" their departed child or children, who, created fallen, as we all are, they fear resemble an Esau or an Absalom, in that God has suffered them to live and die unrestored, not "born again"—to such, the discovery which removes the cloud from this most cheering revelation, which we read in so many Scripture texts, will be indeed invaluable.

Also, we deem this discovery of high value, because that in the pre-eminently important matter of men's salvation it reconciles the teachings of Scripture with the one only possible deduction of our reason from the data which the Scriptures supply. It does this by removing the barrier thereto which the belief of an eternal torment interposes. They tell us that God is love, which is benevolence in its highest manifestation; also, that he is infinite in knowledge, in wisdom, and in power. Infinite benevolence creates men, and endows them with immortality. Inevitably, then, He must design for them an immortal happiness. To secure this, He possesses a knowledge, a wisdom, and a power, all of which are infinite. No matter, therefore, through what sufferings his wisdom may determine that they shall intermediately pass, the result finally to these immortals will be—*must be*—an immortal

happiness ; and the numerous teachings of revelation, such as the two texts we have named, harmonise with this only conclusion at which human reason can arrive from these data. The eternal happiness of all men, finally, is the only possible conclusion. *To arrive at any other the data must be changed.* We repeat, in this most important of all important matters to that vast majority of our fallen race whom infinite wisdom suffers to live and die still fallen—not created anew—an enlightened reason pronounces the entire Scripture testimony logically harmonious. “The Lord is good to all ; *and his tender mercies are over ALL his works*” (Ps. cxlv. 9). In possessing and nurturing the conviction we express, we find much to cheer us in the text, “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him ; *in those that hope in his mercy*” (Ps. cxlvii. 11, also Ps. xxxiii. 18).

In some of the following Chapters, it will be our design to exhibit more fully, and to confirm by further proofs, moral and scriptural, the very important truths which this Chapter enunciates.

## CHAPTER II.

## OBJECTIONS MET.

A FEW apparent difficulties remain, which we will now consider. Besides the text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," there are two other texts or Scripture passages which seem, as this does, though not in like direct terms, to teach that God's vengeance shall endure for ever. We have already seen that this cannot indeed be; but we will consider these two passages.

The first is Mark ix. 43, 44, "If thy hand offend thee cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." What is here affirmed of the hand is afterwards repeated of the foot and the eye, and in similar words, in verses 45 to 48.

The necessity of making these texts square with their stereotyped belief of an eternal torment seems to have overpowered our orthodox divines, and caused them to refuse that light upon their meaning which is to be derived from an examination of the last verse of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, of which they are in part a quotation. In these texts, our Lord honours his prophet by quoting three times his very remarkable words. Isa. lvi. 28, we read, "And it shall come to pass that from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord"; then follows the verse (24) on which we remark, "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; *for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched*, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." The

prophet here describes an earthly scene. He speaks of the carcases — evidently putrefying carcases — of men who have transgressed against God. He says that their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched. As it is indubitably an affair of earth, we may rightly ask how long it may last. Clearly and necessarily, only until the bodies are utterly destroyed.

This one text demonstrates how groundless is the assumption that because a fire is stated to be unquenchable it will therefore be supernaturally prevented from accomplishing its accustomed destruction. On the contrary, God's penal fire is literally and absolutely unquenchable, just because it will inevitably do that very thing. There is no hope to the finally impenitent that the fire will be extinguished till it has accomplished in them that absolute destruction which is called in Scripture the second death; the death from which there will be no resurrection. Most happily, the common belief—a belief too dreadful to contemplate—that the living bodies of men subjected to that awful fire will be kept eternally alive to endure eternally its excruciating torture, is an assumption utterly destitute of any scriptural authority.

Viewed in the light gained from the prophet Isaiah, the texts in St. Mark are seen to confirm our interpretation of our Lord's words, "everlasting punishment." We believe the following short paraphrase gives their true meaning. "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell (Gehenna), where the worm and the flame shall destroy thine entire body." Also the following, though less literal. "It were better for you that your body should enter into life maimed or defective, than that this proper vestment of your immortal spirit should be wholly destroyed in God's unquenchable fire." So understood, we see a special point and aptness in the comparison made in those texts. It is a comparison between the perishing of one member and the perishing of the whole body, as we read (Matt. v. 80), "It is profitable for thee that one of thy mem-

bers should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Gehenna). This comparison can have no instructive meaning to those persons who, holding the popular notion of the eternal punishment, affirm that the body never will perish at all, either wholly or partially. How clearly does our Lord indicate in this text that the *casting into hell* of the entire body will be the *perishing* of the entire body. Gehenna is a place of destruction, not an abode or dwelling. It is never so described in Scripture. *Scheol* (Hebrew), and *Hades* (Greek), equivalent terms, are also translated Hell; but they are not identical with Gehenna, and ought not, therefore, to be translated Hell. We need a term to express them. They represent what was the abode of all departed spirits before our Lord's resurrection; as when it is written of our Lord himself, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Hades) (Acts ii. 27). Gehenna is the true Hell of Scripture, as in Matt. x. 28, where our Lord says, "Fear not them which kill the body; but rather fear him who is able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell" (Gehenna). Destruction, not an eternity of awful suffering, is the alternative to which he points.

The interpretation here given of the texts quoted is, we think, the natural one. When Isaiah speaks of "carcases" burning in unquenchable fire, it is certain he can neither mean nor imply everlasting torment; and no reason can be shewn why we should believe that his words when quoted by our Lord mean either infinitely more, or anything essentially different from their meaning when used by himself. We say no reason can be shewn for so believing; but we think there are very strong reasons why we should *not* so believe. We have no right to impute to our Lord a meaning which his quotation does not warrant. When he quotes a text which teaches a literal destruction, we do him a great wrong if we use his quoted words to shew that he designs thereby to teach that God will inflict an eternal torture. Certainly, if it were true that the bodies of all whom he creates in a fallen state,

and whom he does not please to create anew in this life, will be finally subjected to the excruciating torture of fire through an endless eternity, or to an eternal suffering in *any* form, it would be also true that he foreknew this before he created them, as exactly as he will know it [hereafter. *Clearly, in such case, he created them for this foreknown eternal destiny.* Awful thought, and blasphemous! It libels God's moral character! To insist that our Lord teaches this doctrine, because he uses words which teach that the bodies of unregenerate men will be destroyed by fire, is a most serious error, which is pardonable only because its believer does not see the very awful imputation it casts on the moral character of the infinitely benevolent Creator, who foreknows all final issues.

To explain, conformably with the popular notion, why the worm is introduced as well as the fire in verse 44, has elicited much uninspired ingenuity. To say that the worm means the human conscience, or its chidings, proves only the ready power of man's invention to create a desiderated meaning. It is an extravagant and utterly unwarranted assumption, for which there is not even a semblance of authority in the inspired Word. There, although the worm is often named, it is not once named otherwise than in its natural sense, except only when man is called a worm. How much better to confess ignorance of that which we do not understand than to invent a meaning for Holy Writ.

The second of the said two opposing texts is Rev. xiv. 11. It is introduced as follows (verses 9, 10): "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Then follows (verse 11), "And

the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever ; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

We leave to others to explain this hieroglyphic passage. Obviously, the words "for ever and ever," in this last verse (11), are the only words which oppose, even seemingly, the texts which teach Christ's universal redemption ; for although the unerring Word informs us that God is love, and that Christ is the Saviour of all men, it nowhere says that God will deal leniently with sin, either as regards the character of the suffering he will inflict, or its duration. It is obvious, however, that neither intensity of suffering, nor its long duration—if terminable—is incompatible with the doctrine that Christ will finally claim the immortal spirits of the sufferers as his purchased property by virtue of his mediatorial sufferings and death ; claim them, we mean, just as he ever claims sinners on earth, viz., by giving to them that repentance and forgiveness of sins which, so long as he retains his mediatorial character and office, he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to bestow. It is observable that the judgment denounced in the preceding texts is denounced, not against all unregenerate mankind, but solely against those who worship the beast and his image ; also, that not a word to indicate the final and universal judgment is introduced. These facts remembered, also the peculiar character of the book, none but an inspired commentator could be warranted to affirm that that judgment is not a temporal judgment, or series of temporal judgments ; and the said words, "for ever and ever," in verse 11—words against which we strongly protest, on the ground that they are not a translation of the original words, but are the translators' substitute for it—these words furnish the only seemingly good reason we know for an opposite sentiment. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." So says our authorised translation. But we have quoted many Scrip-

tures which shew that the final punishment of the wicked will be literally destruction, a second death of their bodies from which there will be no restoration. What then follows? Does Scripture contradict itself? Does it tell us in one text that the final punishment will be an eternal torment, and in very many other texts that it will be an absolute destruction? Certainly, if in this text the words "for ever and ever" are the true equivalent of the original Greek words, it would seem inevitable that Scripture does contradict Scripture. But are they the true equivalent? They are not. They are the translators' substitute. Instead of "for ever and ever," the Greek words translated literally are, "to ages of ages"; viz., "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up to ages of ages." Possibly some persons may say, But is not our English phrase, "for ever and ever," the true meaning of those words? We say, It is not; and our proof is scripturally incontrovertible. Concerning Messiah, we read in our English version (Heb. i. 8), "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is *for ever and ever*"; also (Rev. xi. 15) we read, "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign *for ever and ever*" [literally, "*to the ages of the ages*"]. In both of these texts (English version) *for ever and ever* is affirmed of the reign of Christ. Is this then an absolute eternity? What says St. Paul? 1 Cor. xv. 24, he writes, "Then cometh the end." Query, what end? We reply, The end of the ages; the end of all time. If the words "for ever and ever" be a true translation, then it is the end of the "for ever and ever." The whole passage reads thus, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him who put all things under him,



that God may be all in all." Thus we see that Christ will not indeed reign for ever and ever, but only through all time — *i. e.* throughout the ages of the ages; in other words, until that very notable period which the Apostle calls "the end," when times and epochs shall all terminate and be swallowed up in an absolute eternity. We call this an incontrovertible Scripture proof that the Greek words translated "for ever and ever" do not indeed mean "for ever and ever."

But when will this grand consummation be? After the resurrection, events of highest moment will remain still to be transacted; viz., first, the very awful judgment, with all its multifarious and minute revelations of men's character and conduct; next, the execution of its terrible decrees, and after this, the ecstatic revelations of "the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. v. 5, also i. 8, 2 Cor. i. 14, Phil. i. 6 and 10, and ii. 16), when exercising over all his redeemed ones who are still fallen and unrestored, though most deeply humbled, the plenary powers assigned to him as a Prince and a Saviour, "to give repentance and forgiveness of sins," and, necessarily, with these also sanctification, he will verify before assembled worlds his own remarkable words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Thus, this vast multitude which no man can number, the great bulk of our adult fallen race, still unregenerate and unrenewed, will be finally "subdued" unto Christ, "the living God, who is the Saviour of all men" (1 Cor. xv. 28, and 1 Tim. iv. 10). And when all things shall be thus subdued unto him—"for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet"—"THEN COMETH THE END." Then, his mediatorial work completed—not one jot or one tittle having been allowed to pass from the Gospel revelations, any more than from those of the law, until all has been fulfilled—then, but not until then, "he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. liii. 11).

The preceding quotations show that to reign throughout all the manifold epochs of time, and until an absolute eternity

shall be ushered in, is to reign "to the ages of the ages"; or, as our translators have pleased to render it, it is to reign "for ever and ever"; and we may most safely feel assured that the "for ever and ever" predicated of the torment of the beast, will not outlast the "for ever and ever" affirmed of the divine Mediator's reign.

Two other texts remain on which we must remark. The Apostle Peter, in the second chapter of his second Epistle, discourses throughout concerning some very eminent deceivers and corrupters of Christianity, and writes (verse 17), "to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." St. Jude, writing also very fully of the same class of persons, says (verse 4) that they "were before of old ordained to this condemnation," and adds (verse 13), "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

We have already briefly adverted to these texts. We have remarked concerning Judas, and those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost, that the literal annihilation which was expressed by our Lord, when he said that God "is able to destroy both body and soul in hell," is, we believe, their prospective destiny. And when we read that "the mist of darkness for ever," and the "blackness of darkness for ever," is reserved for these offenders, we read words than which none could more exactly or forcibly convey the idea of an utter annihilation.

We have now noticed, as we believe, all the texts that may be supposed to teach everlasting misery, and we find in each of them another meaning, a meaning perfectly legitimate, and not less literal than the commonly adopted one; a meaning which differs from that of eternal misery in this most important particular, viz., that it contradicts nothing which the Scriptures elsewhere teach. It follows, therefore, that if the many texts which affirm so unequivocally Christ's universal redemption must, each and all of them, be negatived and silenced by stronger counter-evidence, it is not to the texts now reviewed, or any of them, we may look to supply it.

## CHAPTER III.

## OUR LORD'S INCIDENTAL TESTIMONIES.

WE know that in Scripture all unregenerate men are called the Wicked, because they are sinners unrenewed and unpardoned. Such are all men naturally. Concerning all who die such, our Lord's direct testimony is, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46). Christian Churches believe that these words mean everlasting torment or suffering. But there are occasions, which seem to us incidental, when our Lord refers to the same subject in other terms; and the question we now propose is, Do his incidental testimonies in this matter confirm, or do they disprove, this opinion of the Churches? Let us see.

We read (Luke xii. 47, 48), "That servant who knew not his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

Obviously, the teaching here is in direct antagonism to the doctrine of an eternal suffering. For how can an eternal infliction, even of the mildest kind, be rightly or truly represented by the words, "few stripes"? Life rational is either a good or an evil, a blessing or a curse. If happiness preponderates, even though there be some suffering, it is a blessing. If suffering preponderates, no matter what be its mildness or alleviations, it is a curse. An immortal life in which suffering preponderates is an eternal curse. But what mildness or alleviations can there be in hell—Gehenna? Even without

the fire, if this could be, still it were all suffering—no alleviations. Surely, then, it cannot be truly said of any persons who are doomed to an eternity of suffering, even the mildest possible, that they are beaten with few stripes! Clearly, this text ought to undeceive those who believe in a future eternity of misery. It falsifies their creed. From this dilemma there is no escape, unless it can be shewn that there is some intermediate state between heaven and an eternal hell; a state which will afford intermissions from suffering. But this will not be alleged. Heaven is the only city of refuge, and none but those who are fit for heaven can possibly be admitted there; that is, only those whom God has previously regenerated and sanctified. Ignorance of their Master's will and character may be a very good reason why men should not be subjected to an eternal torment, but it can be no reason at all for their admission into heaven. It is just the opposite. It is a decisive disqualification. It remains, then, for those who believe in that awful doctrine to explain to what region which is not hell such persons must go, where they may receive their mitigated punishment, *i. e.*, "be beaten with few stripes."

But surely, believers in an eternal suffering ought to be consistent in their mode of interpreting Scripture. They should not interpret one word strictly and the next word loosely, or as they please. If asked why they believe in a literal eternity of suffering, they refer to the texts of Scripture we have named, and quote those parts of them which seem to teach this. But the severity of those texts does not consist *only* in the perpetuity of the suffering they announce. It consists also in its intensity. The words of our Lord are, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Surely, no good reason can be given why we should believe more strictly and literally in the eternity of the suffering than in its intensity. Yet many, who hold themselves bound to believe in the former, dare to be almost or quite unbelievers

in the latter. They tell us that as regards a very large portion of our race, *i. e.* all who do not possess a divine revelation, the punishment inflicted will not be as the excruciating torture of fire, or anything like it, but only as an infliction of "few stripes"; and ignoring that they thus contradict our Lord, or rather that they exhibit him as contradicting himself, they quote the text on which we remark to prove it. Thus they tell us virtually that the words "everlasting fire" are improper words, and very erroneous as regards a very large class of those to whom they will be addressed; and that the words, "beaten with few stripes," express in their case the true meaning. Instead of saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," the true meaning would require that the words used should be, "Depart from me, ye cursed, and be beaten with a few stripes." Thus, adopting one of our Lord's teachings, they reject the other. They please to ignore it. Surely, this cannot be right. Nevertheless, these seeming opposites are our Lord's teachings. They must, therefore, be true, the one equally as the other, for he cannot falsify himself. It is essential, therefore, that we see their harmony. Failing this, intellectual honesty demands our admission that we do not accurately understand them, or at least one of them.

In order to a right conception, let us understand the words, "everlasting fire," used by our Lord, as we understand the words, "eternal fire," used by St. Jude, when he writes (v. 7), "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire"; *i. e.*, let us understand that fire as the penal fire of the Eternal or Everlasting One, designed not eternally to torture but to destroy, and which is called everlasting because it never ceases until it has destroyed utterly and for ever that on which it acts. Instead, then, of using one Scripture to contradict or nullify another, let us understand the difference of suffering, of those who are beaten with many stripes and

those who are beaten with few stripes, as commencing at death—as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus—and terminating at that most eventful period when, after the second death of their body by that penal fire, He who was previously the Judge shall reveal himself as the universal Saviour; in other words, when, amid the adoring acclaims of an assembled universe, the glorious revelation of Scripture shall be verified, that “Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all, *to be testified in due time.*”

So understanding the various texts, the seeming discordance of the Scripture testimony disappears. Until reconciled to God through Christ, *i. e.* until Christ interposes to save them through that repentance and forgiveness of sins which he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to bestow, all sinners, however comparatively light or dark may be their differing shades of moral depravity, are under the curse of the law; and none but those called in Scripture “elect” are rescued from this curse in this present life. When, therefore, in the great day of assize, the awful sentence is pronounced, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” that sentence is addressed equally to all unregenerates, *i. e.* to all who are on the left hand of the Judge. No distinction is made between those who knew their Lord’s will and those who knew it not. Because unregenerate, unsanctified, and therefore *unfit for heaven*, all must alike depart into that everlasting fire which is the second death, although the sufferings thereof, as we think our text directly proves, will be variously attempered, according to the character and guilt of each. We know that *as martyrs*, many of God’s elect have suffered death by fire, supported by the Saviour’s promise, “I will raise him up at the last day.” *As unregenerate sinners*, all the non-elect will be subjected to a second death in God’s penal fire, and with the certainty that their bodies shall not be restored. If, however, as so many good men believe, the bodies of all who shall be cast into that fire will be preserved eternally alive, to

endure eternally its excruciating torture, we ask, will these excellent men, with this fact so inconceivably horrible palpably before them, affirm, nevertheless, that our Lord's words will be verified which say that a certain class of transgressors, a class which includes the great bulk of mankind, shall be beaten with few stripes? To require us to believe such affirmation, if their appalling creed be true, or if an eternal suffering of *any kind* be true, is to require that during the time needed for this mental process we should cease to be rational! Obviously, on their hypothesis, our Lord's doctrine of few stripes is absurd. *This proves decisively that that hypothesis is an error.* The doctrine is truth, unerring truth. It is our Lord's most clearly expressed averment. That vast majority of our race who have not been privileged to know their Master's will, *i. e.* to possess his Holy Scriptures, will be beaten with few stripes. That this will be so, we have the assurance beforehand of Him who will finally be the judge.

This explanation of the words in question satisfies us. It suffices to satisfy our reason. We believe that the more or less of physical suffering in the everlasting fire which will destroy the body, also of previous mental suffering in a fearful looking-for of judgment through all the centuries which will intervene between the death of most of these unrenewed ones and the judgment, quite suffices to explain, consistently with all other teachings of Scripture on the subject, how, while some are beaten with many stripes, others may be beaten with comparatively few stripes.

While we accept most reverentially our Lord's infallible testimony in this matter, we would remember it is imperative that we believe also simultaneously the inspired revelation that "the living God is the Saviour of all men"; and that he is not the less surely such because he is more "especially the Saviour of those who believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). Also, we must believe simultaneously his own words which affirm, "If I be

lifted up from the earth, I will draw *all* men unto me." These words are unmistakeable. We may not disbelieve, we may not *doubt* them.

We quote next Mark viii. 36, "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Here our Lord employs the words, "lose his own soul," to express the same thing which he elsewhere calls everlasting punishment. He is the speaker in both cases. He is therefore his own interpreter, and his words demonstrate that the everlasting punishment he reveals will be the everlasting loss of the soul. We are thus shut up to the conclusion that unless our Lord spoke unadvisedly, and used a term utterly unsuited to express his meaning, the true everlasting punishment to which the wicked will be doomed will not be an everlasting torment, but an everlasting *loss*. They shall lose their own souls. Any other than a literal interpretation of the word *lose* is made impossible by the sentence which follows, "or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *i. e.*, what shall a man give in exchange, that he may recover back the soul which he has lost?

We may suppose an objector to say, I do not understand this: a man's soul is his immortal spirit: clearly, that which is immortal cannot be lost. We reply, That is true, and it is therefore certain that when our Lord spoke of a man losing his soul, he did not mean his immortal spirit. In Scripture, the word translated soul (*psyche*) does sometimes, though rarely, mean man's immortal spirit, but commonly it is used as an equivalent for the man himself, the living person. It is thus used in the text quoted. If we refer to Cruden's Concordance, we find that in a large majority of cases where this word is used, the personal pronoun I, thou, or he would be the true equivalent; as when we read, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," the sense would be equally given by the words, "I do magnify the Lord"; also, for "whatever thy soul desireth," we may rightly read, "Whatever thou desirest," &c.



As thus commonly used in Scripture, the word *soul* represents the compound nature, *i. e.* the animal equally as the rational being; and, because the loss of the body involves the loss of the compound nature, it involves the loss of a soul in its commonly used Scripture sense of a person. Therefore, we read of a soul being saved from death (James v. 20), "He who converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall *save a soul from death*, and hide a multitude of sins." Of course, the words, "save a soul from death," must mean, save a *person* from death, for the immortal spirit will not die. It is to save the *man* from death, *i. e.*, to secure immortality for his person conjointly with his immortal spirit. Sometimes the word "soul" means only the animal being, as (Isa. xxix. 8), "It shall be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he waketh and his soul is empty." How clearly in this case the word "soul" is restricted to the animal being; also (Luke xii. 19), "Soul, take thou thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." In commenting on the words, "I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless" (1 Thes. v. 23), Scott describes the soul as meaning "the animal life, with its various sensitive appetites." We repeat, the words "lose his own soul" mean *lose his living person*, or, which is the same thing, *lose his life as a man*. And St. Luke's version of our Lord's words makes this certain. He quotes them thus, "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" (Luke ix. 25.) Undeniably, therefore, to lose his soul is to lose himself, or be cast away. It is to lose his living body, which will be the condition of all who shall not "be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead." They are lost souls, because as men they cease to be; just as when we speak of a wrecked ship, and say there were sixty souls on board, and all perished. Certainly, we do not mean that sixty immortal spirits perished.

We next notice the preceding verses of the same chapter.

Mark viii. 34-5, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Our Lord here distinctly intimates that a determination to follow him at all hazards will sometimes involve a loss of life. He therefore informs his disciples that every one who under these circumstances decides to save his life shall lose it; but that he who shall lose his life for Christ's sake shall save it.

Obviously, nothing could be plainer or clearer than are the words of this text, "He who will save his life shall lose it." How is it possible to misunderstand? What is it that he shall lose? He shall lose *it*—*i. e.* the identical life he desires to save—his personal life. Also, "he who shall lose his life for my sake shall save it." Query, What shall he save? He shall save that identical life which he has for a season lost—his personal life. We know an atheist might reply, Why that is absurd! But no one who believes in the resurrection of the dead could so reply. Our Lord has said of every one who believes in him, "I will raise him up at the last day." Three times he repeats these words, John vi. 40, 44, 54. Thus, every such person will recover, and for ever, the identical life which he has lost, *i. e.*, the life of his body; while the bodies of the unregenerate, though also raised again, will be again destroyed. What could be clearer than are the words of the text we review? Taken literally, as we believe they ought to be, they leave no room for mistake.

We see, therefore, that finally there will be a saving and a losing of men's personal life, *i. e.*, of their body, and that its loss will be inflicted as the penalty of sin. Clearly, if the loss be for ever, as it certainly will be, it will be an everlasting punishment.

It is proper to note that the word "life," which occurs

twice in verse 35, and the word "soul," which occurs twice in verses 36, 7, are the same word in the Greek (*psyche*); and that the losing of the soul in verse 36 is, therefore, as in the other verses, the losing of the personal life, *i. e.*, of the living body.

We repeat, that in these seemingly incidental testimonies we have our Lord's own interpretation of his words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment;" that punishment being the extinction of their compound being, their death for ever in their persons as men. And how exactly do the Apostolic testimonies harmonise with this; as when St. Paul writes, "The wages of sin is death." If it were an eternal torment, we are sure our Lord and his Apostle would not affirm otherwise, one calling it "death," and the other saying, "lose his own soul," "lose himself," "be cast away."

We find, then, *two* doctrines on this most important subject; one in the written Word, and another in the Churches. We have just given that of our Lord. But Christian men affirm that the true penalty of sin unpardoned at death will be an eternal torment in hell. An avowed dissent from this doctrine they call heterodox. Our choice is, therefore, a dilemma; and we choose to be heterodox with our Lord and his Apostle, rather than to be orthodox with even the best and the wisest of men.

We notice next Matt. v. 25, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison." Verse 26, "Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Whatever may be the primary reference in verse 25, we believe that of verse 26 is to men unregenerate and unpardoned in their responsibilities to the Supreme Judge. We cannot doubt that the prison here adverted to is that compartment of Hades where Dives was when he entreated the kind offices of

Abraham, and the captives in which will finally receive the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." The words on which we comment are the very remarkable ones, "till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." What do these words mean, something or nothing? To say the latter were a libel on our Lord; yet to this we are shut up by the common opinion of the Churches regarding the eternal punishment. According to this, even eternity will not supply an exit, for the last farthing never will be paid; and the simple truth would have been rightly and forcibly conveyed, *and the suggestion of any misapprehension made impossible*, had our Lord said nothing about paying the uttermost farthing, but used simply the words, "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt never come out thence." But these further words are on record; and how exceeding, yea infinitely important, is the thought they suggest, viz., the payment *sometime* of the uttermost farthing, and thereupon the release of the debtor. But what is that extreme payment, that uttermost farthing? We know of only one possible answer to this question. It is the surrender for ever of the debtor's body, which is doomed to an absolute destruction. He belongs to that very large class which shall not "be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead." In this eternal surrender he pays his uttermost farthing; and his immortal spirit, now a second time disembodied, becomes the property of the Saviour who bought him, and who for this reason finally extinguishes the creditor's claim. He extinguishes it in his own atoning death, the merits of which, also of his own perfect righteousness, he passes to the prisoner's account when he claims him, *i. e.*, when he gives to him repentance and forgiveness of sins. Thus God's high perfections are glorified, his infinite purity and rectitude, in his uncompromising punishment of sin; his infinite love, in his wonderful provision of a Saviour, God's only begotten Son. Thus the debt is paid, even to the uttermost farthing; and the hitherto imprisoned spirit, now eter-

nally rescued, rejoices in that divine Saviour, "who gave himself a ransom *for all, to be testified in due time*" (1 Tim. ii. 6).

In these incidental testimonies we have the benefit of our Lord's personal comments, which interpret to us unerringly his words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

## CHAPTER IV.

## ETERNAL MISERY HIGHLY IMPROBABLE.

CHRISTIAN Churches, however dissenting from each other in divers matters, all base their creeds on the Holy Scriptures. The principle is a sound one, that nothing is true in theology but what is either directly taught therein or which can be proved thereby. This is our avowed basis. We found our creed on the texts we quote, *naturally and literally interpreted*; an interpretation which, when the texts are not obviously figurative or prophetic, is, we believe, in all cases, the true one. But, of many of the texts we quote, the literal interpretation is directly opposed to the belief commonly entertained by the Churches regarding the final destiny of those who die unregenerate—not born again—*i. e.* regarding the final destiny of an immense majority of all whom God rears to an age when they become responsible to him for their actions. Seeing, therefore, that the literal and natural meaning of many very important Scripture texts is rejected, we think it right to show, if we can, by legitimate reasoning, that the natural interpretation of these texts is also that which accords most exactly, not only with the general teachings of Scripture, but with the teachings also which our natural reason deduces from the revealed character of God. We base nothing on human reason, viewed simply in itself; but for the natural interpretation of Scripture texts, when, besides its own inherent evidence, it is thus proved also externally to be the true interpretation, *for this* we claim the faith of Christ's disciples. If their faith be not due to the natural and literal, certainly it

cannot be due to any forced or non-natural, interpretation of Scripture texts.

One Scripture tells us that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of *the world*" (1 John iv. 14); another declares that "the living God is the Saviour of *all men*" (1 Tim. iv. 10). These, and many other Scripture testimonies equally unmistakeable, are in direct opposition to the avowed creed of the Churches regarding an eternal infliction of penal suffering on a large portion of our race. We think that these direct testimonies ought to be accepted as direct truths; but, seeing that they are not so accepted, it behoves those who do accept them to shew, if they can, that their literal meaning is imperative; imperative, because it is necessary to the harmony of Scripture with Scripture; because also it is necessary to harmonise Scripture with our own moral perceptions, based on the revealed character of God. These facts we aim to shew.

One of the arguments we have already used shews that God's infliction of an eternal misery is morally impossible. God's moral character makes it so. We shall hereafter present that argument more fully. But, as prefatory to this, we will enumerate certain reasons which show that an eternal misery is highly improbable. We are content at present to say, "highly improbable," though, perhaps, some of the following reasons may shew that it is scripturally or morally impossible.

We say an eternal misery is highly improbable,

First—Because it is unreasonable to believe that, instead of utterly destroying his enemies, as his inspired Word declares he will, the thrice Holy One, who "is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity," should, nevertheless, sustain them eternally in being, thus immortalising sin and rebellion. We read (Ps. cxlv. 20), "All the wicked will he destroy;" also (Ps. xcii. 7), "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they

shall be destroyed for ever." To believe that God will not immortalise sin is truly reasonable; and these texts prove that it is as truly scriptural. We have already explained how we understand the destruction which these texts affirm.

Second—Because it was not revealed to the Jews. If it were true, we cannot conceive it possible, considering the very intimate relations in which they stood to the Supreme law-giver, that this most awful penalty of disobedience should be concealed from them. Deut. xxviii. 15, we read, "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee." In fifty-three verses which follow, the curses are described. They are all temporal. No intimation is given of an endless torment or suffering. If this latter were the true reality, is it reasonable to believe that not even a hint of this inconceivably terrible and literally infinite curse should be given, but that its announcement should be postponed to burst upon the Jews with a horrible and overwhelming surprise in the world to come? To believe this seems to us very *unreasonable*.

Third—Because the teaching of Matt. v. 44, 45, 48, is opposed to it. In these verses, our Lord teaches, by an inference which seems inevitable, that sooner or later God will forgive all his enemies. To forgive them involves their regeneration, for it involves his gift of repentance, and the revelation to them of himself as a God of love. The texts read thus: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Surely, we may say with certainty that God would not



command us to forgive our enemies, and all who have wronged us, if he intends to be eternally unforgiving himself. He would not require us to return good for evil, and tell us that we must thus resemble our Father in heaven, and be perfect as he is perfect, if he intended to pour out his vengeance for ever upon those who have done evil against him. With these verses before us, we cannot reasonably believe that God will eternise his wrath, and thus teach men practically that the principle of forgiveness which his beloved Son so especially enjoins is suited only to earth and time, and that vengeance is the true God-like principle which shall endure for ever. Surely, this cannot be!

The cogency of this argument is incalculably increased by the fact, that God 'has only to will it in order to convert his enemies, any or all of them, and at any time his wisdom sees fit, into his deeply humble and devoted servants, as he did Saul of Tarsus; also by the fact, that he has provided a Saviour and Mediator, through whom he *can* do this, not only honourably, but with the highest honour to himself, because consistently with all his high perfections. Will he then do it? Only a sufficiency of love is needed to insure that he will; and *God is love*.

We infer, therefore, from these texts, that an eternal misery is, to say the least, highly improbable.

Fourth—Because no man could rightly thank God for his own creation, or for giving him children, if it were true that an eternal misery will be finally the doom, either of himself or of any of his descendants. We read (Gen. xxii. 16, 17), "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore." Certainly it was, in God's estimation, a distinguished blessing which he pronounced upon Abraham, when he said, "I will multiply thy

seed as the stars of heaven," &c.; yet, if it be true that all persons who die unregenerate, and especially those who deliberately and persistently deny the Lord who bought them (2 Peter ii. 1), will be consigned to an eternal misery, this will certainly be the doom of a very large portion of this very seed who were promised to Abraham as an eminent blessing, and with the very solemn sanction of an oath. Had Abraham known that this would be the final result to numberless thousands and myriads of his promised offspring, who can imagine what would have been his feelings? Who can doubt that, in an agony of emotion unutterable, he would have said, "O no, Lord, I entreat thee, do not bless me thus: these my promised children, who do not yet exist, create them not: they have not yet sinned against thee: spare, O spare them, then, the eternal agonies to which the being thou designest for them will introduce them: of thy great mercy I pray that thou wilt not bless me thus."

How impossible it is that truth could have justified such a response to a promise which God described as a signal blessing! But if this would have been a wrong reply, and not founded in truth, then it cannot be that the seed thus promised to Abraham, or any of them, will be subjected to an eternal torment, although it is most unhappily true that with very few exceptions they do, as just remarked, die unregenerate, "denying the Lord that bought them," and have done so through more than eighteen centuries. But "Christ died for all;" therefore, sooner or later, his words will be verified, which say that "all manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men," and this will include—certainly not the sin which he specially excepted, but it will include all other sins, even the sin of denying their Saviour. God's gift of life, rational and immortal, is a boon of inestimable value. It is a gift worthy of the giver. Next to the gift of his Son, it is the highest which God can bestow, for if not stamped with his own immortality, all his gifts would be comparatively valueless.

Although this high gift is imparted to us in a nature already tainted with sin, and from which our recovery is impossible without God's regenerating grace, which he does not generally accord in this life, yet in giving us a life rational and immortal like his own he designs to bless us. It was for this reason he gave it. Thus he manifests his character. His essential goodness and beneficence are seen. His knowledge is infinite, and it is impossible that God, who is love, could dignify any of his creatures with immortality *as a foreknown eternal curse*. This is impossible. It is an obvious contradiction. It is as truly impossible, morally, as that twice two should make three numerically. In promising to Abraham a numerous seed, it was to bless him in his posterity; and he could not do this without also blessing *them*. A seed accursed with an eternal misery could not be other than a curse to Abraham, and of an infinite magnitude. But when God, who sees all things in the light of truth, says he will bless, it is certain he means to bless. He would not say he will bless, if the eternal misery of the promised seed, or any of them—all of whom he could regenerate if he would—were at that time present to his omniscient sight, as it must have been if such will indeed be the final state of those who die unregenerate. Think of this, you who believe in the eternal misery of a large majority of our adult fallen race, and say, Is the affirmative of this the deliberate opinion, the assured conviction, with which you honour the God you adore? What Christian man, when he reflects thereon, will dare to say he believes that when God Most High swore by himself that he would bless Abraham with a seed as numerous as the sand on the sea shore, the eternal misery of the great bulk of that seed was one of those futurities which are ever present, vividly present, to his infinite mind. Even to suppose this possible is to blaspheme God in our thoughts.

We think these reasons prove that an eternal misery is morally impossible, but we adduce them here only to show that it is highly improbable.

Romans xi. 26, St. Paul writes, "And so all Israel shall be saved." Query, Does the Apostle use the word *all* in this text to mean only a minority? The common belief says, Yes. We say he uses it to mean exactly what it does mean. It strongly corroborates our past remark, that there are two salvations: one of the elect in this life, and another hereafter of the non-elect in their disembodied spirits.

The case of our first parents illustrates still more fully our present position. We believe that Adam and Eve are among the redeemed in heaven. It is not extravagant to suppose that they know all that we know concerning the race of which they are the parents, and what will be their eternal state. If to writhe for ever in the fire which shall never be quenched be the appointed destiny of all who die unregenerate, this will certainly be the destiny of the great bulk of their innumerable children. We mean of those who attain to adult life. All evangelical Christians will admit this, because they believe that the bulk of mankind die unregenerate. We cannot know what the present feelings of our first parents may be, when contemplating in heaven this most appalling—supposed to be—fact. We can judge only of the feelings proper to them on earth, and as associated, not with an innumerable family, but simply with one or a few of its numbers, as indicating the feeling they must have in regard to all the rest. Cain was Eve's first-born. At his birth she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Probably she thought this was the promised seed which should bruise the head of the serpent. The Old Testament history of Cain shews that he lived unregenerate, and the New Testament references to him shew that he died the same. He was a murderer—a fratricide. It seems certain therefore that if the Gehenna, or true hell of Scripture, will be indeed an eternal abode, he will be one of the innumerable myriads who shall endure its endless torments.

Let us then suppose that, soon after the birth of Cain, the Lord had revealed to his parents their own future and that of

Cain, precisely such as each future has been in this life, and as it will be in the next, making clear to them on the one hand the high felicities which themselves will enjoy eternally in heaven, and on the other the awful sufferings which Cain will endure eternally in hell. Let us further suppose that after making this revelation he had told them that they might if they pleased purchase Cain's exemption from his future of awful suffering, never to cease, by the sacrifice of their own future of a rapturous felicity in an eternal communion with God in heaven; in other words, that he would, if they pleased to make the personal sacrifice, annihilate for ever the being he had given both to Cain and to themselves. We now say, let any intelligent Christian parents, of unquestionable piety, suppose themselves in the position which the preceding picture assigns to Adam and Eve, and realising that position, if they can, let them say, would they accept the heavenly bliss tendered to them on the unutterably awful and dreadful conditions proposed. We cannot doubt what their decision would be. They would say, On the terms proposed, even heaven would be no heaven to us: it were impossible: ours, too, would be an eternity of wretchedness: let, then, the eternity which is future be to us precisely as the eternity which is past: a past eternity is gone, and we knew it not: we are content not to know the eternity to come: until very recently, our condition was nonentity: let ourselves and our child return together to the nothingness from which we have sprung. Independently of their being parents, this is the conclusion at which pious Christians, taught by our Lord to love others as themselves, would arrive. Thus we see that an eternal misery being true, our first parents could not while on earth, and with the feelings proper to earth, have thanked God for their creation, even though, instead of countless millions of descendants who live and die unregenerate, Cain had been their only child condemned to an eternal suffering.

In this connection we naturally think also of David and his

rebellious, though still tenderly loved son, Absalom. Most happily for David, an eternal torment was not taught by Moses and the patriarchs, and it was not, therefore, David's creed. We know what his decision would have been in the case we have supposed. Very decisively, though not directly, his own words inform us, when on hearing of the death in battle of that son who had taken up arms against him, and referring simply to that earthly death, he cried, "O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. xviii. 33.)

But while David, who knew nothing of an eternal torment, thus acutely mourned the death of Absalom, how incomparably more deep and intense, as well as permanent, must be now, in our own times, the anguish, silent and unexpressed perhaps, of the thousands or tens of thousands of pious parents, one or more of whose youthful or adult children, removed by death, leave behind no decisive evidence of their conversion to God, but in many cases leave evidence which appears only too clear, and which in some cases, like that of Absalom, is absolutely decisive to the contrary. Those parents who believe, as most pious parents do, that as surely as God's word is truth all who die unregenerate will be doomed to an eternity of awful suffering, and who have perhaps full reason to know that their child so died, how *can* they be consoled? What can ministers or pious friends do towards supplying a consolation which the religious convictions of all alike shut out? To the martyr, even at the stake, God's consolations may abound, for he knows that the fire which consumes him is only for a moment, and that it will terminate in an exceeding weight of glory; but an assured belief, or even a conscious reason to fear, in the mind of pious parents, that their child will be doomed to flames alike terrible and for ever, what consolation can avail for this? Oppressed with this terrible conviction, how can *they* serve God acceptably? Speak to them of the Divine favour and

eternal happiness for themselves, and they inwardly ask themselves, as with a conscious self-indignation, can they be indifferent to the eternal agonies of their child because an eternal happiness is reserved for them? This were, in their view, not only a selfishness unutterably base, but a most awful and deliberate cruelty of heart. Death having consigned their child to an eternal misery, from this time forth they cannot thank God for the being he has given to themselves. The only true and sincere wish of which they feel capable is one utterly nugatory; it is that they and their child had never been born. All more than this is simply a heart-rending submission to a believed inexorable necessity.

To resume. If, then, we are right in assuming that our first parents would have preferred that their own being should be eternally extinguished rather than that Cain—their first born—should endure the eternal agonies which a professed orthodoxy teaches will be his inevitable doom, we ask, What pen can describe, or imagination conceive, what would have been their feelings, could they have known that countless millions of their children, even all who have hitherto died unregenerate, and all who shall hereafter die unrenewed—not born again—down to the end of the world, will dwell for ever with “the worm that dieth not,” and in “the fire that never shall be quenched”?

Yet this is the position, in relation to the great bulk of their descendants, which a professed orthodoxy assigns to our first parents. Surely this fact should suffice to convince us that its teachings are not true teachings in this very awful matter; and that, as all errors in Christian theology are founded on a misinterpretation of some text or texts of the new Testament, the said teachings are, beyond reasonable doubt, an error so arising.

Certainly with such feelings towards their children as are common to Christian parents, and which were so remarkably exemplified in David, our first parents would sacrifice their

celestial bliss millions of times over, if this were possible, and that it would avail to rescue their innumerable unregenerate offspring from an otherwise inevitable eternal torment. Thus we see that, an eternal misery being true, and supposing all the facts known to them whilst on earth, not only they could not have thanked God for their own creation, but they must have viewed God's gift of a rational being to themselves as millions of times worse than a positive non-entity.

And the case we have now contemplated in reference to Adam and Eve is the case also of Noah ; and on a scale large or small it is the case of a very large portion of the entire redeemed already in heaven, most of whom, we cannot reasonably doubt, have children or descendants who have died unregenerate. And as regards pious parents, lay and clerical, now living, we ask, On what scriptural ground can they expect that their own children or descendants through ages yet to come will escape that eternal torment which they so strongly believe that innumerable descendants of faithful Abraham, the "friend" of God (2 Chron. xx. 7), will not escape ? Or, on the other hand, believing that an eternal misery will be the doom of a large portion of their own offspring, can they in sincerity of heart thank God for their own creation ? How terrible is the thought ; a multitude of immortals—their own immediate issue or descendants—dwelling for ever, as they believe the bulk of those of faithful Abraham will dwell, in devouring flames. How terrible, even though the suffering were not literally fire ! How terrible an *eternal* suffering in *any* form. Certainly if an eternal misery be true, it follows that unless pious parents lose in heaven all the kind feelings and compassion—to say nothing of parental love—they possessed on earth, and which are especially enjoined in Holy Writ, a large multitude of the redeemed in heaven would gladly pass from their mansions there into an eternal oblivion, if by so doing they could rescue their children or descendants from the eternal agonies which they believe are



taught in the words, "the worm that dieth not and the fire that shall never be quenched." In short they would wish, from the utmost depth of their soul, that themselves and their children had not been born. Should the question be asked, Is it not highly improbable that any parent who gains admission into heaven will ever have such a wish, we say most decidedly, "Yes;" but only for this reason, that it is very highly improbable (and more than improbable) that any individual of a race which God has created fallen, yet has dignified with immortality, and which also Christ has died to redeem, will be subjected to an eternal misery.

Does the reader object to our mode of treating this subject? If he does, we ask him to consider the following scriptural example. For an object very dear to himself, though, we believe, infinitely less important than would be the rescue of souls from an eternal misery, St. Paul writes (Rom. ix. 1—3), "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Thus we see that in *some* sense—we don't profess to say *what* sense—St. Paul was ready to sacrifice himself for the benefit of his unregenerate kinsmen, though they were not his relatives at all as we use the term. Certainly they were not his descendants.

Those who defend the doctrine of an eternal misery will tell us—as indeed they must do, or renounce their creed—that it is a great mistake to suppose that the redeemed in heaven will be open to any such feelings as sympathy or compassion for suffering, no matter how terrible or how protracted. Sorrow and crying will be for ever done away in heaven; therefore there will be no room for any disturbing influences such as compassion would produce. Eve will know that her firstborn son, whose birth she joyously announced to her husband in the words, "I have gotten a man

from the Lord"; whom she lovingly suckled at her breast and fondled in her arms with all the warmth of a mother's affection; she will know that every hour that is to her an unspeakable bliss, is to her son an excruciating torture, or, if Scripture terms may be supposed to exaggerate, yet at least an awful suffering, and that it will be so for ever. She will know that the same thing is true with reference to countless millions of her descendants; but this knowledge will have no power to move either her or her husband, or to impair at all their bliss. Now safe in heaven, the universal feeling there, where all is perfection, will be that it concerns not any of them, even though all creation were in an eternal hell, so long as their own dear selves are happy. David, who once cried with deep emotion, "O Absalom, my son, my son," will, in common with all the rest, be perfectly unmoved by the knowledge of that Absalom's awful and ceaseless sufferings. Absalom was wicked. He had wickedly taken up arms against his loving father, and was slain in his rebellion. Nevertheless, while on earth, David's feeling towards him was a tender love and compassion. It resembled faintly the feeling towards our rebellious race, of our Divine Lord, of whom we read that "while we were yet sinners he died for us." So David cried, "Would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." But how changed now that David is arrived in heaven. No more love for Absalom now, nor even compassion. These emotions were proper only to earth. Even eternity impressed on the awful agonies to which his once dearly loved Absalom will be doomed, will not at all disquiet David now. The known endless agonies of countless millions in hell will not damage at all the bliss of their pious kindred in heaven!

Supposing this to be true, it seems natural to ask, Is the moral feeling and character of good men really improved by their transition from earth to heaven? Earth is a school for the education of God's children, that after passing through

all its discipline and trials sanctified by God's holy influences, and finally through death, they may at last "be perfect, as their Father who is in heaven is perfect." Can it then be true that the preceding is the perfection sought? Is an utter callousness and insensibility to known sufferings of the most awful character, sufferings destined to be eternal—is this an essential element of that perfection? If it be, we ask, To what purport all the varied schooling and discipline of earth? To what permanent utility the precepts, "Love your enemies," "Do good to them who hate you and persecute you," &c., &c.? *What permanent stamp of character were these precepts designed to impress on the scholar?* Why all this high training, if it be intended that he shall throw it all aside when heaven is reached; or, as it would seem, that he should come out there in a character which in these notable features is just the opposite of that which God's Word and ministers unite to impress upon him on earth? Can it be indeed true that the moral standard of heaven is lower than that of earth?

It is quite true, however, that there will be no sorrow in heaven; and this fact is to us a strong argument that there will be no *eternal* sorrow anywhere. We believe that a rational nature perfected cannot exclude sympathy with sorrow and suffering, even though caused by sin. In Him who alone is absolutely perfect, Adam's sin and misery originated the deepest sympathy. All perfection is in God, and we see one of the wonderful results of that perfection—indeed, the most wonderful possible—in the text, "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Directly or indirectly, all sorrow is caused by sin. If, therefore, in the sufferings it entails, sin necessarily shuts out its subject from the love which we call compassion, it follows that compassion can never be a duty. It cannot be a duty in this world any more than in the next. But sin did not prevent compassion in God; it was the occasion of his compassion. It was because we are sinners that

Christ died for us. And because the numerous testimonies of Holy Writ, which declare the universality of his atonement, and among which we read that "the living God is the Saviour of all men," are every one of them truth, we may safely rely that sin will not finally shut out "God our Saviour's" compassion from any sinner whom he has endowed with his own immortality. Iscariot was not so endowed—he was "the son of perdition;" and we believe it will be found hereafter that some few others also were not so endowed. The eternal punishment of these awful offenders will be a return to the non-entity from which God's infinite wisdom, for special purposes of his own, caused them for a season to emerge (1 Peter ii. 8). Unquestionably, sin, *i. e.*, the violation of God's law of moral rectitude, will be punished in every sinner. God punishes it in ways innumerable in this world, and when not pardoned before death, he will punish it much more awfully and terribly in the next. By his authority earthly governments too, punish such violations of that rectitude as they can rightly take cognizance of. Thus, directly and indirectly, God punishes sin; but we must not conclude that when he inflicts punishment he does so as an end, or final object to be realised, and so as to shut out all concern for the eternal well-being of the immortal offenders. We must not so conclude, because we must not close our eyes to the fact that, *foreknowing all issues*, God has been pleased to bring into being a world of rationals in a nature fallen, and therefore—without his regenerating grace—*of necessity* predisposed to sin, and in that same nature, to dignify them with the awful attribute of immortality. So to conclude, therefore, would be to contradict not only the inspired testimony that "God is love," and that "he is good to all," but also the like testimony that "his tender mercies are over all his works." He has provided a Saviour, not for the elect only, but for the *world*. St. John says, "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the

*world*," 1 John iv. 14. Blessed with this Saviour—God's unspeakable gift—we believe that all mankind will have cause finally to thank God in highest terms of adoration, love, and praise, for the rational being he has given them, and for the high stamp he has impressed upon it; a stamp which, conjoined with holiness, is the highest which even himself can impress—the stamp of immortality.

Fifth—Because a Saviour, able and willing to save to the uttermost, being already provided, and God's regenerating grace being the only thing needed to secure the salvation of all, it is highly improbable that God will withhold finally that grace from any whom he has brought into being fallen, and though fallen has destined for immortality. We are content to say "highly improbable," though our convictions tell us it is morally certain that God will not withhold that grace.

Immortality and holiness are essential attributes of God. In an important sense, immortality is his highest attribute, for without this all his other attributes would at some period cease to be. He alone possesses, he alone can possess, these attributes absolutely. He can impart them to his rational creation, and in doing so he confers upon them the highest dignity, in that he makes them resemble himself in these high qualities. Though man's natural life is only as a vapour, God can make him immortal. Though, also, he is born in sin, and, without God's restraining and renewing grace, becomes in consequence exceeding sinful, yet God can renew and sanctify him, no matter how deeply sunk in depravity. All Adam's descendants are fallen. They need, therefore, regeneration and sanctification to fit them for heaven. Nevertheless, it is in this fallen state God brings them into being, and endows them with immortality. How awful, then, is their position! Immortality with holiness is an infinite blessing; immortality without holiness is to a rational nature an infinite curse: it is endless life in a character opposed to that of God, which must be endless misery. Seeing, then,

that God has created Adam's entire race fallen and immortal, if it be true that he will leave many of them for ever in that fallen state unchanged and unrenewed, then it is also true that he created that portion of mankind—the many—for an eternal misery. Only He who creates can possibly *re-create*. Only He *can* create them anew. How awful is the thought! We say *if* he leave them in that state, unchanged and unrenewed. All depends on that simple *if*. The question then is, Will he so leave them *for ever*? We know he does so leave the far larger portion of mankind up to their death; and our Lord reveals most exactly that such will be their state also at the judgment. The question is then narrowed to this, Will the thrice Holy One, who created them thus fallen and immortal, and who also is love, will he leave these immortals for ever in this fallen state, unregenerate and unsanctified?

Not perceiving that in so judging they seriously and awfully dishonour God, christian men avow the opinion that he will so leave them for ever. If that opinion be true, we see the awful, but inevitable inference. It is, that God created them, *i. e.*, the great bulk of our fallen race, for a foreknown eternal misery: before he brought them into being he knew, as exactly as he will ever know it, what their final state will be. Having created them fallen, and in this fallen state endowed them with immortality, their eternal misery is certain—inevitable—unless God interpose to prevent it by imparting to them, while Christ the Mediator still reigns, his regenerating and sanctifying grace. Our conviction is that he will do this. His inspired word makes it imperative. It affirms that Christ died for all, and that “God our Saviour will have all men to be saved.” It affirms too that God is love, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. We are quite sure God would not create men *designing* them for an eternal torment. We are confident too that he would not make any man immortal; he would not dignify him with the highest and

most awful of all possible endowments, the godlike attribute of immortality, if he did not design to bless him ; and it is alike certain and obvious that he would not *design* to bless him if he knew that his design would not be realised. All God's designs, and we may add too all his wishes—for *they are the same thing*—all are sure of fulfilment, the ones equally as the others. Man may wish the impossible, but God cannot so wish. It can never be truly said of any wish of God that it either is or was vanity.

We repeat, God made man immortal *because he designed to bless him*, and we reason thus : God's gift of immortality being the gift of one whose knowledge is infinite, and who, therefore, knows unerringly all the final good or evil that will result from this highest of gifts to its possessors ; this fact, and the Scripture fact that God is love, these combined, viewed simply in themselves, and unaided by the direct evidence with which Holy Writ abounds, are, in our judgment, a sure guarantee that at some period—a period which he will select as the best suited to enhance his own glory—God will regenerate and sanctify every human being whom he has created fallen and immortal. Thus, to his awful gift of immortality, which standing alone in a fallen nature would be an infinite curse, he will superadd another gift which makes it an infinite blessing, even his high and crowning gift of holiness. We read (Ps. lxyiii. 18), "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive ; thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Certainly, regeneration and holiness are among the gifts which Christ has received for the rebellious, for without these it is impossible that the Lord God could "dwell among them." In these invaluable gifts, imparted finally to all mankind, the Scripture will be gloriously verified, which testifies, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Sixth—Our Lord's remark concerning Judas Iscariot,

suggests that an eternal misery is highly improbable. We refer to his words (Matt. xxvi. 24), "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

All our Lord's words were wise words. He never uttered a mere truism. If the churches are right in believing that his words, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 44), teach, not a literal and certain destruction of the body, but an awful torture for ever—there was no true point or meaning in that appended remark concerning Judas. For if the popular doctrine were true, that all who die unregenerate will be doomed to an eternal suffering, most certainly it would be true to say, not of Judas only, but *of every one who dies unregenerate*, that "it had been good for that man if he had not been born." To say it of any one of that class in particular would be simply to utter a truism.

But our Lord's words are not vain words, and certainly they do not suggest error. They are fitted and *designed* to instruct. How clearly do they teach that the case of Judas is a marked exception from that of ordinary unregenerates, and that it would not be true to say of these countless millions, whom God, who foreknows all issues, has dignified with immortality, that it would have been better for them if they had not been born. Our Lord affirms this only of the *one* person whom he designates "the Son of Perdition," a title which, in *our* judgment, plainly indicates that his decreed destiny is literally to perish. We believe a like destiny awaits also those few others described Matt. xii. 82.

Seventh—Because evils of all kinds, in other words, sin and its retributive sufferings and miseries, are blots and deformities on God's fair creation; and while we find it difficult to understand why God should have permitted them at all; it seems impossible to believe that he should either ordain or permit them for ever. If we view them as temporary, we can understand that Infinite Wisdom may have some special reasons—reasons of high moment—for their permission.



But that the infinitely perfect God should suffer imperfection in its worst and most repulsive forms to share, as it were, his immortality; that he should please thus to make indelible these awful blots on his otherwise beautiful universe, suffering sin and misery to travel onward with himself through his own eternity; that infinite love and benevolence should reserve a corner of that universe to be used as a hell, where, eternally callous and unmoved, that benevolence can for ever behold suffering in its most agonising forms, the eternal agonies of countless millions of mankind, whom God has been pleased to create and immortalise in a fallen nature; that infinite benevolence should please so to act towards the fallen ones, all "born in sin,"\* and this although a Saviour has been provided to redeem the world, and endued with power adequate to restore to order, peace, and universal happiness all the sad chaos, moral and physical, which sin has introduced; that these very extraordinary things should be true, seems to us highly improbable. To believe them requires a power of faith which is not ours, and which we most ungrudgingly resign to those who have it. We believe that God certainly will not thus immortalise sin and misery, and that he will not finally withhold from *the world* the redemption which Christ has died to purchase for *the world*.

2 Pet. iii. 9, "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

1 Tim. ii. 4. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

We think the foregoing reasons suffice to shew that God's infliction of an eternal misery is highly improbable. We think, too, that some of them prove much more than this.

\* Psalm li. 5.

## CHAPTER V.

GOD'S INFLICTION OF AN ETERNAL MISERY  
IS MORALLY IMPOSSIBLE.

WE now proceed to shew more fully than we have done that an eternal misery is morally impossible. God's moral character and divers moral considerations combine to make it so.

It is a notable fact that the infinite wisdom which permitted the prophecies concerning Christ to be seriously misunderstood by the Jews, through all the centuries which preceded his advent, has seen fit to permit some of the most remarkable of our Lord's sayings to be also permanently misinterpreted. We read (Matt. xxvi. 26), "Jesus took bread and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body." Protestant Christians know that these remarkable words have been, and still are, very grossly misunderstood by a very large section of the professed Christian Church. The Church of Rome insists on understanding the words, "This is my body," in their plainest and most literal sense. They so insist, heedless of the obvious absurdity in which this determination involves them. And in their interpretation of our Lord's words, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," Protestant churches concur with the Romanists. Disregarding or overlooking the obvious contradiction of many other Scriptures which it involves, they alike interpret the text as though it were written, "These shall go away into everlasting torment." They accept this traditional belief. But it is morally impossible that this conception of the everlasting punishment should be a true conception. It is impossible, because it robs the beneficent Creator of his love

and of his goodness, and invests him with a character which is the direct opposite of both. It impeaches God's moral character.

For before God commences any work, he knows with an unerring exactness what will be the end of it. Before he created Adam he knew that he would fall. He provided a Saviour before the world began. He foreknew each individual of the vast race of which Adam would be the father ; how many of them his creating energy would rear into adult life, and what the final destiny of each would be. He knew that comparatively very few of those adults would find that "narrow way which leadeth unto life," of which we read Matt. vii. 14 ; for our Lord himself affirms, "few there be that find it." If, therefore, the opinion of the Churches regarding the eternal punishment be a true belief, the omniscient Creator knew, before he created Adam, that the final state of the great bulk of the race he then decided to create would be an eternity of intensely agonising suffering ; so intense, that the Churches think right to apply to it, as an infliction the agonies of which shall be protracted through eternity, the words—originally those of Isaiah—in which our Lord reveals the final and irretrievable *destruction* of the bodies of the unregenerate, viz., "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." They give to this final destruction, the pangs of which how dreadful soever, cannot be otherwise than temporary, a duration literally eternal. Such—as our evangelical Churches believe—is the everlasting destiny which awaits finally the great bulk of our adult race, and which God foreknew in all its exactness before he created any of them. According to this, God's creating work, in his continued multiplication of our sinful race ever since Adam fell, has been of a most awful character. For many thousands of years past God has been, and now is daily bringing into being thousands of immortals, all inheriting the taint of Adam's sin ; He does this, foreknowing that by reason of the fallen state in which they are

born, and of the sins that will inevitably flow from it in the absence of his regenerating grace; the final destiny of the great bulk of those of them whom he will rear into adult life will be an eternal suffering too terrible to contemplate. Can anything more appalling than this be even so much as imagined? Do the Churches see the *very awful* character of the faith they cherish? Do they see its involved impeachment of the moral character of God? They believe in God's infinite knowledge; that the future is naked and open to him equally as the present and the past. They believe also in an eternal torment which he will inflict; and these beliefs, combined, involve all that we have stated. They involve the dreadful belief that, year by year, through many thousands of years, God has been, and now is, bringing into an immortal existence millions upon millions of fallen rationals, foreknowing that they will become, through eternity, the objects and subjects of his terrible vengeance. We repeat the question, Do the Churches see this; and, seeing it, will they nevertheless maintain that their creed in this matter is an unerring interpretation of God's unerring word?

We will suppose an individual who is bold enough to affirm this. He insists that everlasting punishment cannot mean anything less than everlasting pain and suffering; and the fact that God is adding thousands to these sinful immortals every day, with the certain knowledge that this will be their end, does not at all abate his confidence in his very terrible creed. We will suppose this. We will suppose, also, that he is reminded of the Scripture text, "God is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;" and that he is asked if he believes that God's tender mercies are over this continuous creative work, carried on through thousands of years, and equally now as hitherto, and whose very awful end he thus distinctly foreknows. We will suppose he replies, Yes, he believes it all, because he believes implicitly all that the Scriptures teach. Our question now is, How ought we to

estimate that man's belief? If some one, claiming our confidence as an arithmetician, were to commence by stating that twice two make three, or that two and one make four, might we not rightly say to him, However we might value your opinion on some questions, we have no confidence in you at all as an arithmetician? And might we not, with equal reason, say to our supposed opponent, In *your* opinion, tender mercy and deliberate cruelty of the most awful character are identical, or at least they are not antagonistic: we cannot, therefore, value at all your opinion on any moral question.

We perceive, therefore, that to believe in an eternal torment we must consent to renounce our belief in one of the three following things, viz., either

In God's foreknowledge, or

In his revealed goodness and love, or

In our own rational faculty or power to distinguish between goodness and the highest conceivable cruelty.

But we cannot renounce our belief in any of these things. Therefore we cannot believe in an eternal torment. It falsifies God's moral character.

Yet, in common with the Romanists, Protestant Christians accept as truth this most appalling tradition. Many of them hold it strongly, while they reject as resolutely the Romish doctrine of the real presence in the Eucharist. Matt. xxiii. 24, our Lord speaks of some who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." How strange that any who can swallow the traditional camel, an eternal torment, should strain at the Romish gnat, the real presence. It cannot be truly denied that the seeming scriptural authority for the latter is quite as clear and as strong as is the seeming authority for the former.

That the doctrine of an eternal misery cannot be true, is demonstrable also as follows.

It will be admitted, that, after Adam fell, God would not have created our sinful race, or any of them, if he had not

provided, or determined to provide, a Saviour; that is, he would not have created them for an irremediable eternal torment. Even those who believe in an eternal torment, will admit this. But he *has* created them, because he *has* provided a Saviour. Without a Saviour, he would not have brought a race of fallen ones into being, *i. e.*, he would not have brought into being a race naturally and inevitably predisposed to sin. We say, If this terrible doctrine be true, then a thing which all who profess to be Christians will acknowledge cannot be true, will nevertheless be true. We mean that the following awful lamentation, uttered as with one voice by the innumerable multitude of the damned in the midst of their eternal torments, would be literally true. Let us listen to their awful wail.

“How terrible is the misfortune, how direful to us beyond the power of language to utter, is the fact that a Saviour was provided for us! Had the disobedience of our first parents been punished with extinction of being, we had been spared this eternal agony to which we are doomed. But love and mercy provided a Saviour! So many of us were taught on earth; and for this reason, and this only, the first sinners—our first parents—were suffered to live, and we are now here in these abodes of agony and despair. We owe our present being, our conscious existence, with all these acute sensibilities to pain in which we now writhe, and must for ever writhe; we owe it all to the fact that a Saviour was provided as the so-called gift of infinite love and mercy. But when that Saviour was provided we had no need of mercy, for we had not sinned. We did not exist. Through a past eternity our state was a peaceful nonentity, and the highest manifestation of mercy to us would have been simply to let us remain in that peaceful state from which we did not aspire to be raised. Before our Creator formed us in the womb, he knew in all its exactness what would be the history of each and all of us, also the excruciating torments we now suffer, and shall

for ever suffer, for he ever knows the end from the beginning. Nevertheless, he was pleased to bring us into being. We were all 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mothers conceive us' (Ps. li. 5). He could have regenerated us, had he so pleased. He could have poured out his spirit upon us; he could have put his laws into our minds, and written them in our hearts; he could have drawn us to Christ, had he so pleased; but, although his Scriptures say he is love, he had not love enough for that. So we all died unregenerate; and the destiny of us, miserable immortals, who number ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, is to dwell for ever in these devouring flames, this fire that shall never be quenched. Oh, the terrible misfortune to us, the unutterable calamity, that a Saviour was provided!"

We repeat, how impossible is the thought that such words as the foregoing could be uttered with truth. Yet if the popular belief concerning the everlasting punishment be truth, we challenge its defenders to point to a word or sentiment in that awful lament that would not be strictly accurate. Should they fail to do so, is it too much to believe that they may see reason to doubt if they have understood correctly the words of our Lord, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment"?

Be this as it may, our judgment is satisfied. Certainly there is no ground, either in Scripture or in reason, to believe that God would have willed to create, through sinful Adam, a race of sinners, and while still fallen and unrestored, to dignify them with immortality, if he had not provided a Saviour; and we esteem it equally certain that he would not create any fallen ones at all, knowing that his benevolent intentions to save them would be frustrated—(God's intentions FRUSTRATED!!!)—and that the being he designed to give them in love would be in fact an eternal existence in torments. Surely it is not presumptuous to believe this. God's moral character demands from us this faith.

We will present our further thoughts on this subject under the following heads. We remark,

First—An eternal misery cannot be the necessary sequence of men's non-conversion on earth, because God never intended the conversion *in this life* of any whom he suffers to die unregenerate.

We know an objector may say, If God intended the conversion only of those who realise conversion, why are his calls, invitations, entreaties, warnings, &c., addressed to *all* men? We reply, Unquestionably there is a reason for this, which satisfies the Divine wisdom; and we think it needs only to be understood in order also to satisfy christian men. But our present business is to prove from Scripture that God did not intend the conversion in this life of any who die unconverted. If we establish this, we supply proof that an eternal misery is morally impossible. God's moral character makes it so; for it is morally impossible that God, who is love, should bring into being, *and endow with immortality*, any person or persons of whom it could be truly said that he did not intend to bless them.

Our proofs are simple, and they are scriptural. We say, God never intended the conversion in this life of any who die unconverted. If any one demur to this, we ask him, Who is it that converts men? Do they convert themselves? This is impossible. Conversion—or regeneration, which is the same thing—is God's prerogative. Only He *can* convert men; only He who creates them can possibly create them anew; and we are sure that God never *intends* to do any thing which he does not do. He foreknows all things, and he is the unchangeable One. "I change not," Mal. iii. 6. All he intends he executes. He could not intend any thing which he knows will not be. It is certain he could not intend the conversion in this life of any whom he knows he will suffer to die unregenerate. Surely, this is obvious.

But we have other proofs. They are direct affirmations of



our Lord, and the last quoted will be found unanswerably decisive of this question.

Matt. xiii. 1-8, we read, "The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow." After shewing how a portion of the seed was lost, or became unproductive, and how another portion became productive in various degrees, he closed with the remarkable words, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Although to a small minority of our race through all time—we mean, Christ's true disciples—this parable is full of instruction, yet to the great multitudes to whom it was addressed it supplied no instruction at all. Yet here was the Prince of Preachers—the Son of God himself, whose mission was to seek and to save that which was lost—with great multitudes for his congregation; all of them in nature's darkness, all therefore unsaved; all listening with eager attention to the god-man preacher, and *that* was the sermon he preached: a sermon which left the great multitudes addressed simply as it found them; all exposed to eternal perdition, yet in utter darkness in this awful matter, and not a word spoken to indicate how they might escape the wrath to come! And mark the superhuman power of the preacher. He could control the heart, and unfailingly secure its spontaneous yielding to his will. He could say to men who, until he addressed them, were utter strangers both to himself and his mission, "Follow me," and immediately they obeyed. No matter what were their regular occupations, or how they were then engaged, their obedience was prompt. No sooner did the words issue from the lips of the wonderful stranger, than, without parley or hesitation in any form, they forsook all and followed him. Thus, from among the people, calling first one and then another, he chose his twelve Apostles.

Such was his power ; while his mission was to save the lost. Yet such was his sermon—the short one we have noticed. What would any of our Evangelical Churches say, and especially our Wesleyan friends, if one of their ministers, addressing great multitudes of unconverted men, should preach to them such a sermon as that, and content himself to close it with simply the remark, “He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” We know what they would say, and very properly say ; but our question is, Can we reasonably believe it was our Lord’s wish or intention that the great multitude of unconverted men to whom he preached that sermon should be converted to God *in this life*? We are sure he did not intend their conversion by that sermon ; and if not by that sermon, can we reasonably believe, *concerning the great bulk of them*, that he intended they should be converted at some later period of their lives, *i. e.*, after their already multitudinous sins had further very largely accumulated? *Our judgment says decidedly, No!*

But we have our Lord’s own teaching in this matter, and his words are very remarkable. We read,

Mark iv. 10, “And when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable.” (Matthew reports their words thus, “Why speakest thou unto them in parables?”)

Mark iv. 11, 12, “And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God ; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables ; that seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”

How very remarkable are these last words, “lest they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”

We perceive in these texts, that our Lord divides mankind into two classes, viz., his elect people, and the non-elect. In

substance, he says to his disciples, 'You, the few, are especially favoured in things which pertain to your salvation; but them that are without,' *i. e.* the world at large, 'they are not thus favoured.'

The preceding extracts are, we think, decisive to prove that when God appointed a Saviour who "should taste death for every man," and be therefore literally "the Saviour of the world," he nevertheless did not intend that that large majority of our race, whom our Lord designates "them that are without," should be converted and saved in this life.

We think the preceding evidence conclusive to prove the thing we affirm. But our Lord testifies still more directly in this matter. John vi. 44, he says, "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him;" also, verse 37, he affirms, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Clearly nothing could be more direct or decisive than this twofold testimony. It teaches us, unmistakably, that every one who has indeed come to Christ has been drawn by the Father to do so, whether the convert knows it or not; and it teaches, with equal certainty, that every one who has not come to Christ has not been thus drawn by the Father. The words, "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me," make this certain. We ask, then, Who, in the face of this most clear and decisive testimony—the unmistakeable words of him who will finally judge men and angels—will affirm, as regards any man who does not in true penitence come to Christ for salvation, that God did intend that that man should thus come; or—which is the same thing—that he should be converted and saved in this life? Assuredly, had God the Father intended this, he would have drawn that man to Christ; and it is equally certain—for our Lord has said it—"all that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

But we know that the great bulk of mankind do not thus come to Christ. Clearly, therefore, the Father does not draw

them to Christ, *nor, therefore, intend their salvation in this life.* Unquestionably, therefore, the Supreme Judge, who is also the Creator of all these unconverted men, will not inflict upon them an eternal vengeance because they have not come to Christ for salvation, when himself has declared, "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." His moral character makes this impossible. Created fallen, and dying unrestored—not born again—they are not fit for immortality. For this reason, God might destroy them at death as he destroys "the beasts which perish"; but "his mercy endureth for ever." Even though they were not sinners, they have no inherent merit—nor could have—which would give them a strict right to claim to be immortalised, any more than have the lower grades of being which God has been pleased to create. Of all of them alike, the rational and irrational, the inspired words are true, "for thy pleasure they are, and were created." God has brought them on the stage of being, and, apart from his gratuitous covenant to the contrary, he has an absolute right to remove any or all of them therefrom, when or how he pleases. This is true of all God's creatures, even of the angels who have not sinned. But God has made men and angels "in his own image," and he pleases therefore to distinguish them. He *pleases* to do this. It is simply loving-kindness in God. But these of whom we speak are sinners, unrenewed and unpardoned. Nevertheless, Christ has redeemed them, and will therefore claim them; but his wisdom has determined that, before claiming them, he shall manifest to his intelligent universe his abhorrence of sin in the destruction, utter and eternal, of their newly-raised bodies. Thus, God's essential truth, purity, and rectitude will be vindicated and glorified. These great purposes accomplished, the divine Saviour will claim the immortal spirits which he has redeemed. He will claim them, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled which testify that he died for all, and that he will have all men to be saved.

Reader! are you conscious that you have not come to Christ? If you are, suffer us to ask, How does this consciousness affect you? Does it make you very anxious in spirit, and very desirous to come to Christ? If it does not, your true prospect for the judgment is God's penal fire. If it makes you very anxious, we say to you, Encourage this feeling. Do not say, I must wait till the Father draws me. This deep anxiety is the initial feeling of every one whom the Father draws. His drawings are not supernaturally manifested. To wait for the supernatural is to abandon yourself to your present unregenerate state. Regard your anxiety as the initial drawing of the Father, and rejoice in it. We read, John xvii. 8, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Do you wish thus to know God and Christ? Read often our Lord's many gracious sayings recorded in the four gospels. Read them believingly, confidingly, and converse with Him in prayer while reading them, ever remembering his memorable words, "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*" (John vi. 37). Explain your anxieties to your pastor, and be guided by his teachings. We presume you have already been introduced by baptism into Christ's outward and visible kingdom; but you are not, or ought not to be, satisfied with this. You know he has said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments"; and he appeals specially in one case to all his disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me." Obey this command. Advised by your pastor, come to Christ at his sacramental table. Thus manifest to the church and to the world that you are his professed disciple, and prove your sincerity throughout by a holy life and conversation. If you do all these things, it will be because the Father has drawn you to Christ; and the Saviour's promise will finally be yours, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40, 44, 54).

Second—An eternal misery cannot be true, because, those

supposed to be subjected to it, being born in a fallen nature and suffered to die unrestored—not born again—it would be an infinite cruelty.

God creates all mankind in a fallen state and nature. In this fallen state, without his regenerating grace, sin is inevitable, a scriptural holiness is impossible, and the divine Saviour cannot save. His words are, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). Such is God's first creation—his creation in nature of Adam's entire race. Such is their character in embryo at their birth; they are fallen. Each and all of them need to be created anew. We believe God does thus create anew in death all who have not personally sinned, *i. e.*, all infants and all of tender age, as truly as he created anew the thief on the cross. Until, therefore, God regenerates and makes them new creatures, *i. e.*, until he makes them in his unerring sight infinitely better than they were when he brought them into being, they are utterly unfit for heaven, and cannot therefore be admitted there. Nevertheless, God suffers the great bulk of our race to live and die in that same fallen state in which he creates them. He does not create them anew. And what is the result? What do our Evangelical churches say? They say, with regard to all whom God does not please to regenerate in this life, that he will leave them unregenerate for ever. This is their traditional faith. It is true, the sins of these unregenerates are many, but not too many nor too great for Christ our redeeming God to cancel. Though red as scarlet or as crimson, his atoning blood would suffice to wash them all away. The repentance they need he can bestow, for he is "exalted a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins." But they have committed a sin which we are told God will never pardon. They have lived long enough to sin grievously, and to become personally responsible to God; and thus loaded with personal sins, the natural and certain result of their fallen nature, they have finally left this world in the

same fallen state in which they entered it—unregenerate, not born again, not created anew. This sin—the sin of dying unregenerate—Arminians and Calvinists alike tell us God will never pardon. For this sin he will doom them to an eternal torment, expressed, as they believe, in the words, “their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Though entertaining the highest respect for all our brethren in Christ, yet from this common faith of Calvinist and Arminian we most decidedly dissent. An agonising *destruction*, combined with all that is terrible in its antecedents and accompaniments, is the severest punishment God ever inflicts. He is “the Saviour of all men,” and “will have all men to be saved.” For the foregoing reasons we say, an eternal misery cannot be true, and will not therefore be inflicted on mankind, or any of them, for the sin that they are not created anew, nor for any or all of the sins which have resulted from the fallen state in which they were born. God is not cruelty. He does not create men in a fallen nature, and leave them unregenerate in order to fit them for an eternal hell. We repeat, God most high is not cruelty. His tender mercies are over all his works.

Third—The doctrine of an eternal misery cannot be true; because, if true, it would cancel, in reference to the great bulk of our race, the first and great commandment in its rightful claim upon them: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

For, supposing this doctrine true, we reason thus: When God brings into being those whom he foreknows will die in their sins, he creates them for a foreknown eternal torment. Nothing can be more obvious, or more certain, than this. To create them under such circumstances cannot be in love to them. It is a cruelty more terrible than language can describe. Such being the facts, it cannot be their duty to love their Creator. To command them to do so would be

only to add to the cruelty. To love their Creator can be the duty only of those whom he creates in love, and designs to bless. This is a truth needing no proof. It is self-evident. None can deny it.

See, then, our dilemma. The inevitable sequence is, either we must renounce the doctrine of an eternal misery, or we must sacrifice the first and great commandment in its claims on a large majority of those whom God has created fallen. The doctrine and the commandment cannot co-exist.

Orthodox theologians! Calvinists and Arminians! which of these are you prepared to surrender? You will not, you cannot surrender the commandment. How obvious, then, and imperative, is your alternative. You must surrender the doctrine. An eternal misery cannot be true. You misinterpret the few Scripture texts which seem to teach it.

How delightful is the thought that in that commandment, so full of divine benignity and of moral beauty, we have a practical assurance of the final happiness of our race, because it is addressed, and *can* be addressed, only to those whom God creates in love, and therefore of whose salvation finally it is itself a guarantee. The Omniscient One knows that those whom he commands to love him will have abundant reason to love him for ever. If it were otherwise, he would not demand their love. All his demands are righteous demands. He knows it is morally and absolutely impossible for men spiritually dead to love God, until he quickens them into spiritual life. He knows it is morally and absolutely impossible for fallen men to love God until he first regenerates them, and, revealing himself as their Saviour, implants that love in their hearts. They cannot love an unknown God, and they cannot know him until he is divinely revealed to them, as our Lord informs us (Matt. xi. 27), "*Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*" He tells us, too, "*This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ*



whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 8). His command to love him being addressed to all mankind, is a sure pledge that sooner or later he will regenerate all, and reveal himself to all mankind. It is his love which demands our love. This is the spring, the fountain; "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). When God reveals to our hearts that he loves us, then, with a delightful spontaneity, we obey his command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

It is worthy of note that all God's commands, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are also declarations. They declare, in each case, the thing which shall finally be, or which shall not finally be. Our Lord condenses them into two, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

If these were the edicts of one who has no power over the heart or its affections, they would prove nothing. They might or might not be obeyed. But when we remember that He who issues them has infinite power to mould and to renovate our affections—that he has only to "speak, and it is done," to "command, and it stands fast"—are we not right in saying that his command to all mankind to love him is a guarantee that before the "*end*" shall come—that end when the Mediator shall cease to reign—the love of God shall reign supreme in every man whom God has dignified with immortality; and, together with this love to himself, the love also, deep though subordinate, of every creature who bears his moral image? When God says, "Thou shalt," how can we rightly doubt his declaration? How can we doubt that the thing which he affirms *shall be*, will certainly be? Is He, like mere creature sovereigns, compelled to submit to men's disregard of his published will, his only remedy being an infliction of punishment? Certainly this never has been, and never can be, the predicament of the Infinite One, "*of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things.*" His

moral power over creature mind and will is not less truly infinite than is his physical power over matter. Certainly, not necessity, but his infinite wisdom alone, prevents, during the present initial period of our being, his exercise, unceasing and universal, of that moral power.

Fourth—An eternal misery cannot be true, because, when God created man, it was his design that he should be eternally happy.

It was for this reason God made him immortal. As already remarked, God would not have thus dignified him if he had not designed to bless him. But what do we mean by immortality, as applied to creature-beings? We read (1 Tim. vi. 16) that "God only hath immortality." We reply, that God makes angels and men immortal, in that he decrees to sustain them eternally in being. This is the highest and only immortality which any creature-being, whether human or angelic, can possess, viz., God's immutable purpose thus to sustain him. An essential immortality is incommunicable. It can and does inhere only in God. If, then, it be admitted that the eternal happiness of our entire race was God's design in creating them; in other words, if that little work of high repute, called "The Assembly's Catechism," affirms truly, as we are persuaded it does, that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever," it follows, of necessity, that the doctrine which teaches that a large portion of our race will be subjected to an eternal misery, cannot be true. For it was God's design—one of his chief ends in creating our race—that his creature man should enjoy God for ever. This being God's own design, we say *it is sure of accomplishment*. This truth appears to us self-evident. If it be objected that man's unregenerate will, in its natural obstinacy and bias to sin, while it is nevertheless essentially free, may prevent the realisation of God's benevolent design to restore fallen men and secure for them an eternal happiness, we reply, *that is possible only on the supposition that God has*

no power to regenerate them ; in other words, no power to correct the awful damage which the fallen nature in which he pleases to create them has inflicted on them. But we know the contrary. If he had not this power, all mankind would be irretrievably lost. It is only because he has it, and exerts it, that any of our race, even the best of them, are fit for the society of heaven. His regeneration and sanctification are infallible correctors of human wills opposed to God ; no matter how exceedingly wicked and depraved, nor how exceedingly perverse such wills, with all their boasted freedom, may be. God can correct them, and *only he*. Man's moral nature is as entirely in God's hand as is his physical nature. His power over man's affections—his love, his hate, his tastes, his preferences, which invariably direct his will—is as perfect and entire as his power over the nerves and muscles of his body. We hear much of man's free will. We know how promptly our Lord changed the very strong and opposing will of Saul of Tarsus, notwithstanding its essential freedom. We know, too, that instead of Saul being less truly free after his conversion, it was only then that he became "free indeed," as our Lord interprets freedom, John viii. 32, 36. Certainly, therefore, the happiness which God designs for men cannot be frustrated by any one's unregenerate will, which is thus entirely in God's hand to mould as he pleases.

If the doctrine of the said Catechism be truth, viz., that God designed for man an immortal happiness—"to enjoy God for ever"—it follows, by a logical necessity, that whatever of painful experience and suffering, whether short or protracted, comparatively mild or terribly acute and awful, the divine wisdom may demand that he shall pass through before the Saviour shall finally claim him—an immortal happiness will at last be his. Infinite love suggested all God's benevolent designs, and infinite wisdom and power combine to secure their fulfilment. We ask then, Can these infinities fail of their object? Shall an eternal misery be, after all, the

result to many, or even to one, for whom God *designed* an eternal bliss? To suppose that these infinities can fail, is to suppose that the Eternal in whom they inhere may cease to be. Because, in creating man, God intended to bless him, and that he should "enjoy God for ever;" *because, also, it is certain that God would not create any man for a foreknown eternal misery*; these two facts, both morally incontrovertible, insure that our entire race, though created fallen, will be finally restored and blessed. This was God's design. *He did not intend that the fallen nature in which he created them should ultimately land them in an eternal misery.* His design was to bless, not to curse. It was the design of infinite love. Originating in love, its completion will be love. Being God's design, it is sure of fulfilment, because he knows the future as exactly as he knows the past. His case is the direct opposite of that of men. Their designs often fail. They know not what may be on the morrow. They cannot design otherwise than in the dark. Their intentions may have been very good, but they may prove to have been also very vain. But it is just the opposite of this with God. Who would dare to say of any design of God, *that it is, or that it was, vanity?* And, if there be a difference, we ask too, Who dares say of any *wish* of God that it is or was vanity? He knows the future as exactly as he knows the present. Therefore, the thing he intends shall be, is that which he *knows* will be. He never intends in the dark: that is impossible. He would not intend anything without a certainty of its being accomplished. How impossible, then, that he should intend it, with a known certainty that it will *not* be accomplished. How impossible that God should create any man, intending that he should be finally happy, while he knows for certain that he will be eternally miserable! The absurdity is obvious. Certainly, therefore, the eternal misery of any portion of a race which God created for happiness cannot be true.

We subjoin the following syllogism:

It is morally impossible that God, whose "tender mercies are over all his works," would please to create any being, foreknowing that his final state, if created, will be an eternal misery.

Because God's knowledge is infinite, he cannot create any being without knowing, with an unerring certainty and exactness, what his final state will be. Therefore, no creature of God will be subjected to an eternal misery.

These propositions are undeniable. No truth of Scripture is more obviously and certainly true. To deny the first would be to falsify the moral character of God, and assimilate it to that of Satan. To deny the second would be to strip God of one of his glorious attributes, his infinite knowledge. It follows, therefore, that the doctrine of an eternal misery, in reference even to a single individual of our race, cannot be true. How much less, then, can it be true in reference to countless millions of them!

To insist that our Lord's words, "everlasting punishment," teach this doctrine, is to libel our Lord, and the revelation those words supply. We have shewn what is the Scriptural meaning of that punishment, as explained in other texts, alike by our Lord and by St. Paul. To insist that God created countless myriads of immortals, foreknowing that an eternity of terrible suffering will be to them the certain result, is awfully to blaspheme his character. It is to make the Deist rightly our reprover. He says to us—and rightly, *as regards this matter*—"If such be your God of revelation, I am abundantly satisfied with the choice I have made. I cannot—I will not—believe in a God who creates countless millions of immortals for a foreknown eternal torment. I cannot—I will not—believe in a God who not only *can* be, but *will* be, as intensely cruel as even Satan could be supposed to *wish* to be. I reserve *my* adorations for the God of nature."

We repeat, it is morally impossible that God will inflict an eternal misery on any whom, created fallen, he does not please, in this life, to create anew.

## CHAPTER VI.

AN ETERNAL MISERY IS SCRIPTURALLY  
IMPOSSIBLE.

WE could imagine those who hold strongly the doctrine of an eternal misery saying to us, Shew us a single text in the whole Bible, which, in direct terms, negatives or disproves this doctrine, and we will cease to maintain it.

We accept the challenge. An eternal misery cannot be true, because it is written, "His mercy endureth for ever." This text disproves the doctrine. We have already remarked that mercy and vengeance, which may and do co-exist temporarily, cannot *eternally* co-exist in God. Mercy is one of his essential attributes. Therefore, it is impossible that vengeance should be so too. If the doctrine of an eternal misery were true, vengeance would be one of God's essential attributes, for it would be true that *his vengeance endureth for ever*, and the Scripture testimony, "His mercy endureth for ever," would be falsified. But we have the exact thing required, for it is written (Ps. ciii. 9), "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." Surely this is decisive. Clearly, an eternal misery cannot be: these two Scriptures pronounce it false.

It is true we do not read in the Scriptures the words, *God will not inflict an eternal torment*; but there are numerous texts which negative the doctrine, and in a manner than which nothing could be more decisive. But we need not numerous texts. We need not even the texts we have quoted. We know that Christ is able to save all men. We know that his atonement is sufficient for all. All that is needed, therefore, or

*ought* to be needed, to silence for ever the doctrine in question, is just one Scripture text, clear and unmistakeable, affirming that Christ died for all—all without exception—each and every one. To die for a man is to die to save that man. If not to *save*, it is to die for nothing at all. In like manner, to die for *all*, is to die to save *all*. One text teaching this clearly is all we need, and this we have exactly. We have it (2 Cor. v. 15), "He died for all." Certainly this does not mean that He died for some men of all nations, or of all ranks and character, as many good men would have us believe. The context disproves this limitation. The preceding words are, "If one died for all, then were all dead." St. Paul makes the fact that Christ died for all the proof that all men are spiritually dead. He says in substance, As surely as Christ died for all, so surely are all men spiritually dead. Because there is no man for whom Christ did not die, therefore there is no man who is not (or was not) spiritually dead. Thus all doubt as to the true meaning of the word *all* is excluded. It means all, not *some* of all. We know all men, without exception, are, or were, spiritually dead, and Christ died for every one of these. He died for every man born into the world, Judas Iscariot and a very few others, notably marked in Scripture, alone excepted. And because he died for each and all, it was, at some period before Messiah's reign shall terminate, to save each and all, through that repentance and forgiveness of sins which Christ is exalted to bestow (Acts v. 31).

We subjoin, however, twelve Scripture texts, many or all of which we have quoted before, but our present object is to present them combined, and with a few special remarks. Because each of these texts is itself true, it appears to us very clear that an eternal misery cannot also be true. It will be seen that in each, the reference is to all mankind, without exception, a variety of expression being employed, as though designed purposely to make mistake or limitation impossible. The terms used are, *all*, *all men*, *the world*, *the whole world*, and *every*

*man.* If these terms do not mean all universally and without exception, language does not supply terms that would do so.

1 John iv. 14, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

John iii. 17, "God sent his Son into the world, that *the world* through him might be saved."

Hebrews ii. 9, "That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

In these three texts, the divine object and design in the mission of Christ is explained. It was, that he should "save the world"—"taste death for every man." As already remarked, men's designs may and do fail; their intentions are disappointed; but this cannot be true of God, who can regenerate and create anew every fallen man. To believe failure possible in any recorded design of God is obviously to dishonour God. It is to lower him to the creature level.

1 John ii. 2, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 Tim. ii. 6, "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Tim. ii. 8, 4, "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

2 Peter iii. 9, "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

In these last two texts we have God's determination. He will have all men to be saved; he wills that all come to repentance. Can, then, his will be defeated by sinners whom he can regenerate? If he can regenerate them, to ask this question is folly. But irrespective of this, can His will be defeated? To ask this question is to ask, Is he indeed God, or is he only a creature Sovereign?

1 Tim. iv. 10, "The living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe."

John i. 29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."



John vi. 51, "The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John xii. 32, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

1 Cor. xv. 22, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

In these five texts we see that Christ is the Saviour of all men—the Saviour of the world. We see, too, that he is not merely a potential or *may-be* Saviour, but an effective Saviour—a Saviour really and truly. In these texts, these facts are unmistakeably affirmed or involved.

To decide the question whether it is possible that any child of fallen Adam will be doomed to an eternal misery, we should say that no more can be needed than to read *believingly* the preceding texts. If these do not suffice to settle that question, it would seem to be only a solemn folly to appeal to Scripture to settle any question. If it be indeed true that those who die unregenerate, *i. e.*, the great bulk of adult mankind, will, through an eternity to come, derive no positive benefit from the salvation which Christ has wrought for them by his atoning death, surely all who reverence the Scriptures as God's unerring word must needs wonder, with a great astonishment, how those twelve texts, each and all of them, or rather how any one of them, came to find its way into God's infallible book.

We will suppose the reader to say, I would accept these texts at once as decisive, but you know there are other texts which seem to teach a very different doctrine. In those twelve texts, the salvation of Christ is presented to us as a salvation either realised or designed for all men, without exception; but many other texts teach as clearly that as regards adult mankind the salvation of Christ is in fact the salvation only of that small minority of them who, believing in Christ, embrace him as their Saviour, and prove the reality of their faith by a consistent life and conversation: how, then, can I rightly believe that your twelve texts do indeed teach the sal-

vation of all men ? We reply, It is true there are two classes of texts, and they do seem to teach different doctrines ; but what then ? Must we say that the Scripture falsifies itself ; or because we dare not and cannot truly say that, must we accept the one class whose teachings we think we understand, and reject or ignore the other class whose teachings we cannot reconcile ; or, must we introduce into the sacred text our own fancied emendations, in order to bring the seeming opposites into a forced harmony ? We must do none of these things. We must believe that there is truth in clearly expressed teachings of Scripture, whether we recognise it or not. We know there are texts which announce damnation. Our Lord has said, "He that believeth not shall be damned" ; but he has said also, "I came to save the world" (John xii. 47), and, "I will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 32). What, then, must we do ? Must we say, We believe the one saying of our Lord ; we are sure that "he that believeth not shall be damned," and, because we believe this saying, we cannot also believe the other ; we cannot believe that he "will draw all men unto him" ? If we speak and act thus, we stumble on the rock that was fatal to the Jews. They said, practically, We believe what our prophets have told us concerning the greatness and dignity of our Messiah, and, because we believe *that*, we cannot believe what they say of his degradation. Christian men should not imitate this ; nor should they do the same thing virtually or indirectly. When our Lord says, "I will draw all men unto me," they should not tell us, as they do, that, instead of *all men*, our Lord meant to say *some men of all nations and all descriptions*. We are content to believe that the thing our Lord *did* say was precisely the thing he intended to say. And in the eleven other texts we have quoted, we are satisfied that their inspired authors said just the things which the Holy Spirit intended they should say. Yet each of these texts is also heterodox as it stands, and needs a similar exercise of human wisdom to improve

and make it orthodox, *i. e.*, to destroy its obvious contradiction of the traditional faith of the Churches in an eternal torment. But St. Paul tells us that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men"; and this mystery which perplexes us, *viz.*, the twofold teaching of Holy Writ regarding men's salvation, he explains, not directly, but virtually, in one of the texts we have quoted, for he writes (1 Tim. iv. 10), "the living God is the Saviour of all men, *especially of those who believe.*" Thus we see there are two salvations; one, of those who believe, *i. e.*, of God's elect, in their united body and spirit, and the salvation of all others in some other way. This involves, of necessity, the salvation of the non-elect, in their immortal spirits, while, in their persons as men, they are damned, *i. e.*, *condemned to destruction*, for sins unpardoned at death; unpardoned because Christ, whose mission is "to give repentance and forgiveness of sins," postpones, in their case, these high gifts until after the judgment. There is, therefore, truth in each of these seemingly opposed teachings; a truth of deep significance. Neither of them opposes the other.

Evidently, therefore, the final destruction of the bodies of the unregenerate in God's penal fire, does not make impossible the verification of the twelve texts we have quoted. After that awful event, each and all of these texts will be open to a glorious confirmation. If, on the other hand, all who die unregenerate will be subjected to an eternal torment, this horrible fact will make it absolutely impossible that any one of those texts should be verified. Every one of them will be proved an incorrectible fallacy. But they are unerring truth. The Holy Spirit is their author.

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We add the following observation :

Luke xviii. 81—84, we read, "Then he took unto him the

twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished.

"For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated and spitted on; and they shall scourge him and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.

"And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Here are twelve sensible men, to whom six very plain facts are revealed in the simplest possible terms, viz., that the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the Gentiles; that he shall be mocked and spitefully entreated; that he shall be spitted on; that he shall be scourged; that he shall be put to death; and that the third day he shall rise again: yet, plain and unmistakeable as was this revelation, we read next, to our great surprise, "This saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken." The whole twelve were there, and heard these very plain announcements. Yet they were all in the dark.

How strangely analogous to this has been and now is the case of Christian Churches in reference to the twelve texts we have quoted. The "sayings" those texts reveal are "hid from them!" They know not the things these texts so plainly utter. They cannot understand, so as to accept its truth, the unmistakeable announcement that "the living God," who is "specially" the Saviour "of those who believe," is also "the Saviour of all men."

But, whatever the defect of faith, common to christian men in this matter, there is one thing they *must* believe. It is the negative we have affirmed. They must of necessity believe that He, whose "tender mercies are over all his works," is not and could not be wantonly cruel. They may not and must not believe that God would create immortals for a *fore-*

*known* eternal suffering. They *must*, therefore, believe that to inflict an eternal torment is morally impossible to God, and believing this, they will be prepared also to believe the twelve texts we have quoted.

We repeat, an eternal misery is scripturally impossible.

## CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER SCRIPTURE PROOFS THAT CHRIST  
WILL FINALLY SAVE ALL MEN.

Our foundation is strong. Numerous clear testimonies of Holy Writ, that Christ is "the Saviour of all men," as seen in the various texts quoted in the preceding Chapters, are a strong foundation. A single clear testimony, to that effect, is of itself decisive, if not weakened by seeming counter testimony, having the same authority. And, even then, the counter testimony cannot negative or disprove it. The only legitimate result is, that each throws the true meaning of the other into doubt, and seems to say to us in reference thereto, *Beware how you interpret.* Whatever is material of seeming counter testimony in the question before us, we have already met; our readers will judge with what effect. But our direct proofs, though many, are not exhausted. They have hitherto been selected from the texts which tell us, either in the very words or in terms equivalent, that Jesus Christ is "the Saviour of all men," and that God "will have all men to be saved." But other texts remain, which, while they assert or teach the same truth, append to it reasonings or remarks which show unmistakeably that the salvation which Christ has wrought is not merely a potential salvation,\* either for all or any portion of mankind, but that it will be effectual for our entire fallen race.

\* A potential or may-be salvation, which depends for its efficacy upon some *independent* (!) power in man; such as his will is very commonly and very erroneously supposed to be.

We will suppose the reader to say, You speak of further proofs on the general subject; but the difficulty to me is to believe that *any one* who dies unsaved may, nevertheless, be saved hereafter: do the Scriptures supply so much as one clear example of this? If they do, this will remove the difficulty I feel to believe with you that the salvation which Christ has wrought will, or certainly may, avail finally for all mankind.

We will answer this question. Our doing so will be a fit introduction to our professed subject. We say, The New Testament supplies two clear examples of this class. We refer, first, to 1 Cor. iii. 15. The passage reads thus, commencing at the 11th verse:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (v. 12) "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; (v. 13) Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, for it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. (v. 14) If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." The verse on which we remark, reads as follows:

V. 15, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; *but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.*"

Evidently, the person described in this verse is not saved *before* death, or *at* death; for, although he "*shall be saved,*" he must first suffer loss; and when his salvation is effected, it is "*so as by fire.*" Clearly, he is not of God's elect. He is not of those to whom our Lord will finally address the words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It is not thus that *they* are saved. Just the opposite. Concerning them, St. Paul asks triumphantly, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" And to emphasize the question, he promptly adds, "It is God that justifieth. Who is

he that condemneth?" The fact of a salvation after death is thus distinctly revealed; also its awful manner, "so as by fire." And we are told that this man shall suffer loss. How can this be, seeing that he is to be finally saved, and will not lose heaven? Does the Apostle mean that he will lose the reward of future glory that will be theirs whose work stands the test of the fire? This is not a reasonable supposition. When we are told, categorically, and without explanation, that "he shall suffer loss," we can understand it only of a positive loss; not the loss of something he never possessed. But all this man's works are pronounced worthless. What, then, has he to lose? What *can* he have? We know only of one thing, viz., the "tabernacle" in which he dwelt on earth; his body, temporarily restored at the resurrection. This alone he possesses; therefore, this alone he can lose, while "he himself"—i. e. his human spirit, rational and immortal—shall be saved. When he looks upon the glorified bodies of the saints, he will be deeply conscious that he has suffered loss. And the loss will be eternal.

That this is a salvation *hereafter*, is further proved by the fact that it is realised only after the man's work has been adjudicated by fire, and burned as the result. No such adjudication *can* take place before the judgment. Necessarily, it is a salvation after the judgment. It meets our reader's supposed requirement. It reveals a salvation after death.

Having supplied this required proof, we might pass to our second example. But this is a remarkable text. There are only two texts in Holy Writ which speak in direct terms of a salvation after death, and this is one of them. It is true, each of the twelve texts quoted in our last Chapter depends for its verification on a salvation which cannot be realised until the awful revelations regarding the judgment shall have been fulfilled; yet, not one of these texts supplies a word to indicate the period when the salvation of all men, which they each and all so certainly reveal, shall be accomplished. They



tell us simply that "Christ, the Lamb of God, taketh away the sin of the world"; that "he is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world"; that "he gave himself a ransom for all," and that this shall "be testified in due time," &c., &c; but they say nothing to indicate that "due time" when this universal salvation shall be realised. On this topic, so intrinsically important, and so deeply momentous to the great bulk of our race, they say nothing either to gratify curiosity or to assuage anxiety. They leave us simply to our faith in the book which calls these various texts "the Word of God," and affirms of this Word that it "liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet, i. 28).

We have already shewn that there are two salvations, and the texts we have quoted make our belief of this imperative. They tell us that there is a salvation which shall be enhanced by a reward, and a salvation which shall be impaired by a previous loss, and that this latter shall be realised only "so as by fire." Who, then, may rightly deny that there are two salvations which differ very greatly from each other; also, who may deny that St. Paul refers to these two very different salvations when he writes, "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

But the Christian Churches recognise only one salvation; the salvation which includes alike the body and the spirit, and which precedes death and the judgment. Therefore they do not believe in the salvation finally of any human spirit apart from the body. They believe in the salvation only of those who die in the Lord, as we read (Rev. xiv. 13), "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Of these we read (1 Thes. iv. 14), "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." They believe, therefore, concerning the man to whom our text refers, or rather concerning the numerous class to which he belongs and who have hitherto died, that they all

sleep in Jesus, and that at the last day "God will bring them with him" to be finally saved. And how saved? The text says, "so as by fire." We ask, Is this, then, to be the salvation of "them which sleep in Jesus," and whose beatified spirits are already with Christ in heaven? Surely, the text we review ought to convince us that there is a salvation which differs essentially from that of God's elect, *i. e.* from the salvation of those who are united to Christ in this life, and of each of whom he has said emphatically, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40, 44, 54). If, indeed, the contrary were true; if the invaluable pledge, "I will raise him up at the last day," included those persons whose works, instead of being what are called in the text "gold, silver, precious stones," are what God views as "wood, hay, stubble," *i. e.* as fit only to "be burned," we should be compelled to believe, contrary to all other teachings of Scripture, that all persons, not actually profane or immoral, who profess to be Christians, *whatever their defects spiritually*, might safely take to themselves the comfort of that inestimable promise. The assumption, therefore, that there is only one salvation, is manifestly erroneous.

We understand the text we review, combined with its prefatory context, thus. These tell us that the foundation is Christ, and that the person, *i. e.* one of the two classes of persons referred to in verse 12, also those described in verse 15, build on this foundation "wood, hay, stubble." Clearly, therefore, they are *professedly* Christians; but the Apostle's description of them proves that they are only *nominally* such. They are still unregenerate—not born again—or their works could not be thus totally and utterly worthless, fit only to "be burned." They are not of God's elect; therefore, their outward and apparent connection with Christ, who is the true foundation, will not rescue their bodies from that final destruction in God's penal fire, to which all who die unregenerate will be doomed; while, nevertheless, their immortal spirits

will be afterwards saved through Christ, who died for all, and who, as we read 1 Tim. iv. 10, is "the Saviour of all men," and not *only*, though "*especially* of those who believe." Thus, they themselves—"he himself"—"will be saved, yet so as by fire." These last words are rendered by Doddridge, "so as *through* fire"; and the authors of the "Critical English Testament" give *through* as the true rendering, and illustrate that remarkable phrase thus: "Even so a shipwrecked merchant, having lost his merchandise and his gains, is saved through the waves." They do not show how they apply their illustration, but we see in this graphic simile a valuable truth, and a special aptness to illustrate the salvation of man's rational spirit after the earthly tabernacle in which he dwelt has perished in the "everlasting fire." The immortal tenant is saved through the fire, or "so as through fire." And if not only the nominal professor here referred to as the type of a class, but all others who like him die unregenerate, are nevertheless redeemed by Christ, who is "the Saviour of the world," and "gave himself a ransom for all;" if the many Scriptures which announce this most important fact *must be indeed fulfilled*, must we not reasonably infer that all these redeemed ones, whether they profess Christ or not in this life, will be finally saved in like manner, viz., "so as by fire." Thus, in regard to the final destiny of all who die unregenerate, we see in this text the same truth revealed which we have set forth at length in our first Chapter (pages 48 *et seq.*).

We now pass to our second example, viz., 1 Cor. v. 5. The context commences the Chapter thus. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from you. For I, verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I

were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed." Verses 4 and 5, on the latter of which we remark, are as follow :

(4) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

(5) "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

This is a very remarkable passage. If we are told that the day of the Lord Jesus may possibly mean that period *before death* when the sinner is converted, we reply that the words here used make this supposition (*otherwise untenable*) impossible to be true ; for they shew that the body is to be destroyed *before* the spirit is saved. Its salvation cannot, therefore, be in this life. Also, "destruction" is never affirmed in Scripture of the bodies of converted sinners ; for *converted* sinners are "called to be saints." Their bodies *sleep* in Jesus. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me *shall never die*" (John xi. 26). Certainly, therefore, the spirit is not to be saved in this life. Nevertheless, it is to be finally saved. Not, however, before the judgment ; for we know it is written, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still." Its salvation is postponed to the day of the Lord Jesus. These words, or the synonymous words, "the day of Christ," occur six times in the New Testament, and in every case they point to a period which cannot even be supposed to precede the judgment. If we read the texts, 1 Cor. i. 8 and v. 5, 2 Cor. i. 14, Phil. i. 6 and 10, also ii. 16, we cannot doubt that it is the day when the Divine Saviour will gather to himself and joyfully welcome all whom he has redeemed. It will follow the judgment, and probably will immediately precede that close of all things temporal to which the Apostle refers in the words, "Then cometh the end" (1 Cor. xv. 24). Thus we see that the spirit of one whose body is sentenced to destruction is to be finally saved. How

extraordinary! Will, then, God accord to this sinner a mercy and a love which he could equally bestow, but is pleased, nevertheless, to withhold from all the rest of mankind who die unregenerate? What say our Churches to this? We see but one answer open to them. He will, in like manner, save the immortal spirits of all men, because "Christ died for all."

The Apostle's very solemn adjudication we understand thus. It is as though he had said, "If this man, living in incest, continue in the Church, and die while thus professing himself a member of Christ's mystical body, he will be classed with those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost. His sin 'will not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.' God 'will destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matt. x. 28). Alike, therefore, to remove this scandal from the Church, and to rescue this grievous offender from so awful a destiny, I now adjudicate that he be promptly expelled from all outward and visible connection with the Kingdom of Christ into that of Satan, to which he truly belongs. Let him thus be delivered unto Satan, 'for the destruction of the flesh'; let his body be destroyed, together with the bodies of the innumerable other subjects of that kingdom which shall be sentenced to destruction at the judgment, in order that, together with their spirits—all of whom Christ has redeemed—his spirit also may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Such is our interpretation of that remarkable adjudication, and we ask, Which is the more reasonable belief; a belief that out of the myriads of millions of unregenerate sinners who will come before God in judgment—but for whom, nevertheless, Christ died—he will deal exceptionally with one or a few of them, by finally destroying their bodies, and afterwards saving their spirits, while he consigns all the rest to an eternal misery; or a belief that God will not act thus exceptionally, but that, if he destroy the body and save the

spirit of one sinner who has died unregenerate, he will also destroy the body and save the spirit of every redeemed sinner who has so died? We see only one answer to this question, and it is alike reasonable and scriptural. The destruction of the body will be the end of each and all of our fallen race who die unrenewed; but, being all redeemed by God's eternal Son, who gave himself a ransom for all, the immortal spirits of all will be regenerated and saved "*in the day of the Lord Jesus.*"

It is true that this offender, deeply penitent, was afterwards restored, as we read 2 Cor. ii. 1-8; but this fact does not damage, or affect at all, the reasoning we have used.

The preceding interpretation strictly accords with the literal meaning of the text reviewed, and remarkably confirms the explanation we have given of the nature of the future punishment and ultimate salvation of the wicked. In this respect, it resembles the text we last reviewed.

Having now adduced, from Holy Writ, two examples of a salvation after death, we proceed to our professed subject, viz., to supply some further Scripture proofs that Christ will finally save all men. We quote, first—

Rom. v. 18 to 21. Verse 18 reads thus :—"Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

An important question here is, What is the free gift? This expression is used in three verses. It is explained in the 15th verse, where it is called "the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ." Scott calls it "the free gift of righteousness and salvation." The inspired word being our interpreter, we may rightly read, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift by grace, which is by Jesus Christ, came upon all men unto justification of life." Here we have a most important announcement, viz., that as surely

as condemnation is come upon all men by reason of sin, so surely is justification come (or appointed to come) upon all men through the righteousness of Christ.

We will suppose an objector to say, I do not understand this, nor how it can support your view: the great bulk of adult mankind die unregenerate: their entire life is a life of alienation from God: the words of the text are, "the free gift came upon all men *unto justification of life*": had it said simply, "the free gift came upon all men," this would have strongly favoured your assumption, for it would have seemed to say that salvation through Christ came upon all men: but the words, "*unto justification of life*," are added: how, then, is it possible that lives, which from first to last were lives of alienation from God, can be finally justified?

We reply, that if this objection be really a difficulty, it is not our special duty to solve it. This duty rests upon every Christian objector, equally as upon us. Such an one will admit that all who are saved have obtained this free gift; *i. e.*, the gift which justifies the sinner through Jesus Christ. He will admit, therefore, that the penitent thief on the cross has obtained it. The unerring Word assures us that the free gift, which it elsewhere calls the gift of righteousness, and affirms that it is by one man, Jesus Christ, *came upon all men*. Surely, this is decisive. Every man upon whom this free gift comes is assuredly saved, from the moment he receives it. It cannot be otherwise. Whether explicable or not, how can the objector get rid of the fact; a fact so clearly revealed by an inspired Apostle? Nevertheless, though the truth affirmed cannot be disturbed by anyone's doubts, the question is alike interesting and important, and we will, therefore, for a moment consider it. The question is, How, and in what sense, is it true that the free gift of righteousness came, *unto justification of life*, upon sinners who, until that free gift was bestowed, were immersed in sin?

We remark then, that the righteousness of Christ is the gift in question. It consists in his perfect obedience through life, not only to God's moral law, but to each and all of his Father's requirements, which were special and peculiar to the great work he had voluntarily undertaken as the Saviour of the world; an obedience which he carried out faithfully and perfectly even unto death. This obedience or righteousness was strictly and absolutely a work of supererogation. His entire life and his death were alike works of supererogation. Therefore, the righteousness he wrought in that supererogatory life was a supererogatory righteousness, and is, therefore, most justly at his disposal as a free gift, which we know he never vouchsafes to any but in or after regeneration. He gives it to whom he pleases, and when he pleases. It is his to bestow so long as time on earth shall last, and not only so, but so long as time shall afterwards be prolonged in heaven, *i. e.*, it is his to bestow through all periods and epochs until the "End" shall come of which we read 1 Cor. xv. 24. Therefore, he has power to bestow this free gift—the gift of his own perfect righteousness—in the world to come equally as in this world. His power to do this can cease only when he has delivered up his mediatorial kingdom. The infallible result of this gift to its possessor is eternal salvation. He gave it to the thief on the cross while yet in the body. Therefore, his body is redeemed equally as his spirit, for he has received the Saviour's pledge, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40). It was upon him—as it is upon all who possess it—unto justification of life. But how could this be? Clearly it could not justify a life of sin. But the thief's life had been a life of sin. How then could the free gift come upon *him* unto *justification of life*? We reply, Because it was a *gift*—the *gift* of righteousness—and could not therefore be originally his own righteousness. It was the righteousness of Christ; that supererogatory righteousness which Christ has



accomplished for all whom he has redeemed. A perfect righteousness unfailingly justifies the life with which it is associated ; and the human life which Christ lived upon earth was not for himself but for his redeemed ones, as truly as that his death was not for himself. Therefore, though only sinfulness in themselves, yet when this gift of righteousness comes upon them—which cannot be until after regeneration, *i. e.*, until after their past sins are forgiven—it is a righteousness unto justification of life. There is no perfect righteousness in fallen men, not even in the best of them. Imperfection mars even their best performances. They need a righteousness better than their own to fit them to stand erect at the judgment in the presence of an infinitely pure and holy God. Patriarchs and prophets need it : surely then all others need it.

It may possibly be objected, But how can a righteousness which is not their own justly avail them ? We reply, Because of the true oneness with Christ of all whom he has redeemed, and which commences when he claims them by regeneration, whether while still in the body, or after its final destruction by reason of sin. It is a oneness or union with Christ spiritually, which is as true and real as is their union with Adam naturally ; a oneness as real as that of the branch with the vine. The Apostle Paul realised this oneness when he said, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” When at the judgment our Lord shall advert to those whom he shall have already claimed on earth, it is this oneness which will cause him to use in reference to them the pronoun I, and to say, I was an hungered, I was thirsty, I was naked, &c. As regards, therefore, all those who are in Christ, his righteousness is their righteousness, just as the sap of the vine is the sap of the branches. Thus, when Christ claims his redeemed ones, they become one with him, and his righteousness becomes their righteousness. This is his free gift. And our text informs us that it came upon all men, *i. e.*, it came upon them

in his design and appointment. He decreed that at some period of his mediatorial reign all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam should possess it, because, as the Apostle John informs us, "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). To bestow in his own due time this free gift upon each and all of the vast race which he has created fallen—in other words, to restore them from this fallen state—was the great object of his mission. It was for this he lived in our nature. It was for this he died and rose again; and it is therefore we read, "even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

We will suppose a reader to say, I can receive your explanation as true in reference to those who being in Christ on earth keep his commandments, and are therefore one with him in this life; but I cannot believe that any who were not one with him on earth can become so hereafter. We reply to our objector, You believe that Christ will recognise as one with himself, all who die in Christ. You believe, therefore, that he thus recognises the penitent thief who was crucified with him. Certainly the thief had no works to recommend him to Christ, and thus obtain his recognition of oneness. Christ "is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins." These gifts of highest value he bestowed on the thief. They were his only recommendation, but they sufficed to secure for him that recognised oneness. And they will equally secure the same high distinction for all whom he has redeemed, whenever he pleases to claim them, whether it be in this world or in the world to come.

In the next verse (19) the same announcement is condensed, the only difference being that the word *many*, or, as Greek critics inform us, the words "*the many*" are substituted for *all*. "For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous." The word *many*, which is twice used in this text

(English version), must mean the same in each case. Unquestionably, it means all mankind in the first instance, and it must mean the same when repeated. To suppose that it means only a part of mankind when last used is to suppose that the truth which is affirmed in the preceding text is contradicted in the next; for in the preceding text the word *all* is used to announce the same truth which the word *many* announces in the text which follows. *Many, i. e., the many*, therefore in this text means *all*, as in the preceding text; and we have the true sense if we read, "for as by one man's disobedience all were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall all be made righteous;" because "the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

And the next text adds to this, that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Thus our proofs accumulate. If the aboundings of grace towards a race of sinners exceed the aboundings of sin in that race, it follows of necessity that the sin of each and all of them must, sooner or later, be covered by God's pardoning and regenerating grace, as completely as a sterile land parched by a long continued drought is covered by the copious showers which saturate to overflowing every portion of its surface. That Christ will finally save all men is thus put beyond doubt, to those who accept as God's unerring truth the literal teaching of this text. It affirms that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Therefore the eternal misery of even one sinner, by reason that God did not vouchsafe to him his regenerating grace, would be an eternal testimony that this Scripture is not a truthful witness. How impossible, then, that the great bulk of our adult race—*i. e.*, all who die unregenerate—should be subjected to the awful torments of hell for ever! because He, whose aboundings of grace exceed the aboundings of sin, did not please to impart to them, either in this world or the next, his renewing and regenerating grace. This cannot be. His inspired word is truth. Therefore it is true, that where sin

abounds, grace shall finally much more abound. Therefore we must not doubt, we *cannot scripturally* doubt, that sooner or later God will vouchsafe to every unregenerate sinner his regenerating and sanctifying grace; the only exceptions being the very few whom, for reasons known to his infinite wisdom, our Lord affirms He will not pardon, "*neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*" One of these he calls "the son of perdition."

And how suitable is the next and closing text of the chapter as a finish to this glorious revelation of abounding grace, viz., "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

We know that the reign of sin unto death, spiritual and physical, is not partial but universal; and the reign of grace, therefore, through righteousness unto eternal life, will not be partial but universal; for *as* sin hath reigned, *even so* shall grace finally reign; the latter as extensively, as universally as the former, and much more abundantly. Thus many Scriptures will be verified, and among them 1 Tim. ii. 4, which affirms that "God our Saviour *will have* all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"; the truth concerning God, that he "is love," and that he is therefore "the Saviour of *all* men" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

The revelations which these closing verses of Romans v. supply are indeed glad tidings. Our foregoing remarks shew that we accept them in their literal meaning. But the Churches cannot so accept them without renouncing their belief in an eternal misery, which they are not prepared to do. Obviously, therefore, these verses, thus literally understood, are *to them* mysterious, and we might reasonably expect that they would acknowledge this rather than introduce into the sacred text words designed to change its essential meaning. Clearly they ought not to say that the term *all men*, which occurs twice in verse 18, has two very different signifi-

cations in that verse, and while admitting that it means literally *all men* in the first instance, contend that in the second it means, not all men, but only a small minority of men, viz., "all men in Christ." Scott, whose opinions in this matter are those held in common by the Churches, has a long commentary on verses 15 to 19, from which we extract the following: "As it is evident that *all men*, in the strict sense of the word, do not receive 'abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness,' or obtain 'justification of life'; and that 'all men' in this universal sense shall not 'reign in life,' for some shall 'go away into everlasting punishment;' so the term must be explained in the first clause, of *all men in Adam*, and in the second, of *all men in Christ*, if any consistent meaning is to be affixed to the words (verse 18), unless universal salvation with eternal glory be contended for."

So we see there are reasons why human wisdom *must* be employed to amend Holy Writ, and that a seeming discordance of the sacred text with the conception which orthodoxy assigns to the everlasting punishment is one of these; also, we seem to be told in the last sentence, that no Scripture text, whatever be its words, must be understood to teach universal salvation. If these be good reasons, they would equally apply to the twelve texts quoted in our last chapter, each of which would, in like manner, need to be amended. But we return to the text in hand. When Holy Writ affirms that "the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," we believe this is true of all men literally, as the text declares; *i. e.*, true of the elect when Christ regenerates them in this life, and will be true of the non-elect when he shall regenerate them hereafter. Thus, all men literally shall possess Christ's free gift of righteousness, even as all men literally have inherited Adam's condemnation by reason of the fallen nature in which they are united with him. But when we read (verse 17), "much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by

Jesus Christ," we do not believe that the pronoun *they* means *all men*, but that it is limited by the words which follow *i. e.*, limited to God's elect, who alone are "they which receive *abundance of grace*," and who alone shall "*reign in life by Jesus Christ*." We therefore reject all professed amendments of the sacred text, and accept, without reserve or attempted correction, the universal salvation which the unerring word announces so clearly in these texts. It is a glorious announcement. If we esteem, and most justly, the news of a Saviour which the Angels published to the shepherds to be "good tidings of great joy," although its saving efficacy be limited, as is so commonly believed, to a small fraction of our adult race; of how much greater joy ought we to feel conscious when an Apostle tells us, so unmistakeably, that that Saviour's salvation shall be efficacious for *all men*, *i. e.*, more than fifty times, perhaps a hundred times as efficacious for adult mankind as it is commonly believed to be?

We next quote Romans viii. 19, *et seq.*, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God. (20) For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. (21) Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

These extraordinary verses have called forth much learned remark. An important question herein is the meaning of the word "creature." Even though in two of these verses its meaning be as extensive as some critics contend for, and include the inanimate and the irrational together with the rational creation, yet in verse 21 it is obviously limited. It *can* refer only to rational beings, which are fallen and unregenerate; for it is obvious that of none other it could be rightly said that they are in "the bondage of corruption," and that they "shall be delivered" therefrom "into the glorious liberty of the children of God." To say this either of creatures inani-

mate, or of creatures irrational, would be obviously absurd. We accept this text, therefore, as a direct Scripture testimony that all fallen men shall be finally saved. They "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Who that reverences this text as a part of God's unerring word, can rightly doubt the "good tidings of great joy," which its words so literally and unmistakeably publish?

The whole passage is highly significant. Verse 19 represents the creature (or creation) waiting in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the Sons of God. And why this earnest expectation? As regards the *rational* creation (which we cannot doubt are primarily meant), we answer, Because, when that manifestation shall be, their redemption as fallen immortals will draw nigh; *i. e.*, their "deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Then we read (verses 22, 23), "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Thus we see that all mankind, not only the unregenerate, but also God's elected ones, "who have the firstfruits of the spirit," viz., regeneration, and more or less of sanctification, all these, though differing so essentially in their present character, are alike looking with deep interest and expectation to a future which shall deliver them all from the various and very different kinds of imperfection under which they respectively groan, and land them in that ultimate perfection of being which God has ordained for them; in other words, they are looking in "earnest expectation" for that final "restitution of all things" of which we read Acts iii. 21.

The last verse (28) is remarkable for the explicitness with which it reveals what is that *special* salvation "of those

who believe," of which we read 1 Tim. iv. 10, and which, though clearly indicated in two other texts noticed in our first Chapter, is not absolutely or directly revealed. Phil. iii. 11, St. Paul writes, "If, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead." The final restoration of the body is the distinction he ardently longs for. We therefore feel assured that this attainment must be the *special* privilege of believers; and our Lord's short reference to the resurrection (Luke xx. 85) teaches very plainly the same doctrine. But, in the verse we review, this very important truth is published in terms which exclude any other meaning; and that "adoption," for which St. Paul says, "we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves," is declared to be "the *redemption* of our body." Thus we see that—while as regards all whom God suffers to die unregenerate, not "born again," the words of the Psalmist which say, "All the wicked will he destroy," will be literally verified, though their spirits will be afterwards regenerated—"the adoption, to wit, *the redemption of the body*," will be the salvation "*specially* of those who believe," *i. e.* of those who have believed on earth.

Obviously, the texts we review present a very awkward subject for our evangelical commentators, all of whom hold the traditional faith of an eternal misery. They cannot, therefore, believe the literal teaching of verse 21. They cannot believe that at some period the great deliverance it affirms will be the destiny of "the whole creation which groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." They feel compelled to ignore, or explain away, its very plain teaching. Nevertheless, it is a glorious announcement, that "the creature"—which even hostile critics cannot reasonably deny means, *in this verse*, *rational* creation—will, at some period, "be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

This is indeed good news, but it has not been hitherto



commonly believed. Is it, then, too good for human credence? Must Christians of necessity disbelieve it? Is such a salvation as this too great or too *extensive* for infinite love to accomplish; the love of Him whose LOVE of ruined SINNERS constrained him to assume their nature, and in that nature to die an agonising death to secure their redemption? Each reader will answer these questions for himself.

Our next proof is from 1 Cor. xv. In this chapter, which treats of the resurrection of the body, it is proper to notice that the reference is solely to the bodies of the saints. There is no reference whatever to the bodies of the unregenerate. They will be raised only for the judgment, and for their final destruction in the second death. This is reason sufficient for the Apostle's silence respecting them; a silence which would otherwise be inexplicable.

Our reference is to verse 22. This text enunciates, briefly and unmistakeably, the universality of the salvation which Christ has accomplished. We quote it, together with the verse which precedes it.

V. 21, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."

22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

In these verses the Apostle's object is evidently to shew strongly, and by contrast, the opposite doings of the first and second Adam. In the former all die; in the latter all shall be made alive. Naturally, therefore, we conclude that to recover through Christ the life which he has lost through Adam's transgression must be to every one who realises it a most potent cause for thankfulness and joy. No other conclusion seems possible. But a professed orthodoxy teaches that this does by no means follow. It tells us that the life restored by Christ will be to the great bulk of Adam's adult race a curse, infinitely greater than would be their utter annihilation by death. It affirms that the truth which the latter

verse involves would be rightly given as follows: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; some adults for eternal happiness; most of them—even all who have died unregenerate—for a misery worse than ten thousand deaths." This short commentary gives the so-called orthodox faith in this matter. But surely ten thousand deaths are an exaggeration! Not at all. The comparison is infinitely below the reality. To suffer death as a malefactor—suppose a death by crucifixion once a year for ten thousand years—this would be literally ten thousand deaths. But what is this agony which is limited to a few hours in a year, and which will for ever cease at a limited period: what is this compared to an eternity of suffering—suffering without a moment's intermission? It is less than a drop to the ocean. But it is to the *ocean* of suffering that a professed orthodoxy consigns the great bulk of those countless millions of men and women whom Christ will finally raise from the dead, and whom God brought into being, foreknowing that this would be their destiny. It affirms that, to all who die unregenerate, an eternity of awful suffering will be the result of their restoration through Christ from the death to which they are subjected through Adam! One would imagine such a belief impossible; and that if some of the teachings of Scripture seemed nevertheless to make it imperative, it would at least be acknowledged to be a mystery of the most awful character.

Surely reflection alone should be needed to impress every thoughtful mind that such a conception of the Apostle's words must be an error. Yet, if the assumed data on which it is founded be truth, it is not error at all. Those data are, first, that the words "even so in Christ shall all be made alive" refer only to the resurrection of the body; and next, that *not* destruction, but an eternal torment, awaits the raised bodies of the unregenerate. If these data be true, the inference is certainly true. In that case the life they will recover back through Christ will be to the great bulk of adult mankind

worse than millions of deaths to every one of them. But we know the word life has two meanings. There is life spiritual, and life natural. The former is the highest form of life. It is immortal. The latter is a subordinate form. It is mortal. The Apostle refers to the resurrection of the body. But when, contrasting the work of Christ with that of Adam, he says, "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead," he includes in this a higher thought. He refers to the spiritual equally as to the natural life. The resurrection to a life literally eternal of the bodies of the saints, transformed from the natural to the spiritual; and the resurrection finally of the rational spirits of all unregenerate mankind from their death in trespasses and sins to a life spiritual and eternal; these combined are, we believe, the life to which he points. Thus "in Christ shall all be made alive."

That spiritual life, primarily, is intended in the words just quoted is morally certain. For it is morally impossible that an inspired writer, whose object is to exalt the work of Christ in contrast with that of Adam, should tell us that in Christ all shall be made alive, if the life announced will be only that natural life which will be again destroyed in the great bulk of mankind; or, most especially, if the restored life will be to them a very awful and eternal curse. We are, therefore, compelled to accept the Apostle's words as including the meaning, that in Christ all shall be made spiritually alive.

The following brief comment gives our conception of these texts.

Ver. 21, "For since by man came death," spiritual and natural, "by man came also the resurrection of the dead," spiritual and natural.

It cannot be denied that in each case the spiritual does in fact precede the natural. Certainly, in Adam, spiritual death did precede natural death; and the same is true also of his descendants.

Ver. 22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all

be made alive;" the elect in their united body and spirit, the non-elect in their disembodied spirits.

Spiritual death being recognised as the death threatened in the text Gen. ii. 17, the seeming contradiction of this text by Gen. v. 5 disappears. In the former we read, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; *i. e.*, in that same day, that same hour, thou shalt die spiritually. Gen. v. 5, we read, "All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died." The death that was immediate was spiritual. Natural death was postponed, because a Saviour was provided; and we cannot doubt that it was *only* for this reason postponed.

If verse 22 be not accepted as meaning that Christ will at some period effectually repair the awful evils resulting from Adam's transgression, it must be set down as having no definite meaning at all. To assign to this text, in reference to the great bulk of adult mankind, a meaning which is its direct opposite, and say that they shall be made alive for an eternal torment, is simply monstrous.

How instructive, and pregnant with meaning, is the little word *in* in verse 22. We know that life *in* Christ is infinitely more valuable than the life which is only by or through Christ, and that it necessarily involves the latter. We do not read, "For as *through* Adam all die, even so *through* Christ shall all be made alive"; but we read, "For as *in* Adam all die, even so *in* Christ shall all be made alive." That is, 'As all were originally in Adam, and therefore die, so shall all be finally in Christ, and thus be made alive.' The entire human race were in Adam, as their natural father, when he sinned. Thus they became sinners with him, and are involved in all the consequences of his transgression. And we know there is only one possible way of escape from this awful calamity. It is that we should be in Christ spiritually, as truly as we were in Adam naturally. And verse 22 informs us that *in* Christ all shall be made alive, just as—even so as—in Adam

all die. This truth cannot be eliminated from the text by any non-natural interpretation.

How exactly do the teachings of our Lord and his Apostle harmonise with each other. The former says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;" to which the latter responds, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How decisive are these united testimonies to prove that "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved," will finally claim all men as his ransomed inheritance, purchased with his own blood. None are saved till Christ claims them. He does this by imparting to them his regenerating grace. This is an essential part of his mission. For this he is "exalted a Prince and a Saviour." He gives "repentance and forgiveness of sins." Saul of Tarsus was not saved till Christ thus claimed him. And although the Holy Spirit's actings on the soul are all but infinitely diversified—being in some persons sudden and awfully alarming, as they were in Saul, and in others gradual and even imperceptible to their subject, as we may suppose they were in Timothy—yet none are saved till Christ claims them. If he claim them while in the body, regenerating them and implanting in them that faith which unites with him, they are saved, body and spirit; for they are of those "who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead."\* These are God's elected ones. Concerning each one of them our Lord has said, "I will raise him up at the last day." If he does not claim them until after the execution of the awful awards of the judgment—and his infinite wisdom seems to have determined thus to postpone his claim with respect to the great bulk of mankind—in that case, their disembodied spirits are alone saved. Nevertheless, he died for them all, and he will claim them all; for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus he will

\* Luke xx. 35.

effectually bruise the *head* of the serpent, and not merely his "heel," or his tail. He will repair to the utmost the very awful mischiefs and misery which sin has introduced, and not merely that small fraction of them which it has brought on the elect. Thus, in God's due time, the truth will be gloriously manifested, that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound"; for the aboundings of sin are temporary, but the aboundings of grace, co-extensive in its subjects with those of sin, will be eternal.

So we understand the very notable words, "even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

How abundant are the proofs the unerring word supplies that Christ will finally save all men. We will recapitulate some of them. It affirms that God "wills not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"; that he "will have all men to be saved"; that Christ "died for all"; that he is "the Saviour of the world"; that he "is the Saviour of all men"; that he "gave himself a ransom for all"; that "he tasted death for every man"; that "he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world"; that he "taketh away the sin of the world"; and our Lord himself affirms that he "will draw all men unto him." These Scripture texts, with others like them, form one harmonious whole, all testifying the same thing, the variety being only in the words; a phalanx so strong that successfully to assail them, if this were possible, and prove that they do not really mean what they say, would be to reduce to a very low value the divine authority of Holy Writ.

Yet Christian men do not recognise the truth which these texts combine to teach, notwithstanding its very deep interest and importance; notwithstanding also the very clear terms and varied phrase in which it is announced. They cannot believe that Christ is really and truly what the Scriptures declare he is—the Saviour of the *world*.

But why do they not believe this fact, so fully and so plainly revealed? The texts which seem to teach otherwise are very

few, and we have seen that they do *not* teach otherwise. They do not say or teach that Christ will not save all men. But Christian men have inferred this opposite teaching from those few texts, and their faith in their own fallible inference overpowers their faith in the numerous texts of the unerring word which prove that inference an error. Their inference is that Christ will not save the *world*. Notwithstanding our Lord's positive announcement, "I will draw all men unto me," they insist that he will not do so. They insist that he will save only a fraction of adult mankind. The early Churches originated this unscriptural creed, and succeeding Churches have followed in their track down even to the present. Why they have done so we can only conjecture. We know that opinions, though erroneous, which have been suffered to pass as truth through continuous centuries, become as it were stereotyped in men's convictions, and the mind is blinded to the truth, even though clearly revealed. The Churches have an *apparent* foundation for their false faith; so far as a very small minority, seemingly opposed to a very large majority, of Scripture texts, can be rightly called a foundation; and with that bad foundation they are satisfied. The numerous texts which teach so clearly that Christ is the Saviour of the *world*, and that God will have *all* men to be saved, are estimated and believed by Christian Churches just as the Jews estimate and believe the announcements of their own prophets respecting the humiliation and sufferings of their predicted Messiah. We have before adverted to this. Of course, Christian men do not profess to disbelieve these numerous texts, but they do not believe that which they plainly teach. Calvinists explain them away with devices very transparent, such as that *all men* means *some* of all men. Arminians adopt them heartily in a sense of their own, and *make them the basis of a creed!* Nevertheless, while seeming thus to honour the texts, they do not in fact believe them. Equally as the Calvinists, they repudiate their true meaning. All alike tell us that, although

Christ is the Saviour of the world, he will not indeed save the world, but only a fraction of the world; that although he gave himself a ransom for all, and actually died for all, a large majority of adult mankind will derive no benefit at all from this, but will be subjected to an eternal infliction of awful suffering; that instead of his death benefiting them, it will only aggravate their eternal sufferings; that although we read that the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world, it is certain he never will do so: that all he will do is to take away the sin of that small minority of mankind who, with a Scriptural faith and penitence (which only God can originate in the heart), accept him as their Saviour; and that, as regards the great bulk of the sin of the world, he will never take it away at all: he will suffer it to exist for ever, and to accumulate for ever, and will inflict on its subjects his eternal vengeance; that to believe, therefore, that "the Lamb of God" will at some period "take away the sin of the world," is to believe a heresy; and that, although we read that God will have all men to be saved (1 Tim. ii. 4), he either cannot or will not accomplish their salvation. He will not pour out his spirit upon all men and regenerate all men, either in this world or the next, but will suffer the great bulk of them to live, die, and remain eternally unsaved—not "born again"; created fallen, and not created anew. Some Christian men believe that man's obstinate will, being of necessity free, is an insuperable moral barrier to the regeneration of those who die unregenerate, which even Almighty God cannot surmount, and this although it is written, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. cx. 8); and all agree in this, that notwithstanding the strong words *will have* in the text just quoted, also the comprehensive word *all*, so continuously used, only very few adults will be finally saved, compared with the great bulk, who, dying unregenerate, not born again, will be doomed to an eternity of awful suffering.

Thus we have Christian men in opposition to the New



Testament Scriptures, just as the Jews were, and are still, in opposition to their Old Testament Scriptures: in short, we have the traditional word of Man *versus* the word of God. We ask then, Which of these competitors for human credence must we believe? St. Paul answers the question for us. Rom. iii. 4, he says, "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

Such is the Apostle's judgment. And though it is so uncourteously decisive against a large majority of men of distinguished piety and excellence, we are sure they will excuse its plainness, because themselves cherish strongly this just apostolic sentiment.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## A PRESUMPTIVE EVIDENCE.

HAVING supplied evidences moral, and evidences scriptural, in disproof of the doctrine of an eternal misery, we now supplement these with an evidence which we call presumptive, and which we think deserves a special attention.

We deem it a strong presumptive evidence against the truth of this doctrine, that the belief of it has divided into two opposed sections, the Christian Church, whose doctrinal faith ought to be one faith, as we read (Eph. iv. 5), "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." We refer to the sections called Calvinian and Arminian. For why do that large section of the Church called Arminian reject the Scripture doctrine of Election? It is because if there be an elected people there must of necessity be also a non-elected people, and non-election, *combined with an eternal misery*, impugns the moral character of God. It does so thus. By reason of the fall of our first parents, all mankind being born in a fallen nature, and therefore inevitably lapsing into sin when not prevented by God's exerted influence in providence or in his regenerating grace, are exposed, as both Calvinists and Arminians believe, to an eternity of awful suffering. If, then, God elects certain individuals of them to be saved from that terrible doom, and if only the elected ones can be saved, it follows that in electing only these to be saved He elects that all the rest of mankind shall be eternally damned. He could, if he pleased, through regeneration, save them all through Christ; but we know he does not thus interpose in this life, and both Calvinists and Arminians believe that he never will do so. We know our Lord has said, "Strait is the gate,

and narrow is the way which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it;" and their united belief is that, of all adult mankind, those few will alone escape an eternal torment in hell. So believing, a most painful dilemma seems to be presented. The Christian disciple, with the New Testament in his hand, reading the various texts which teach, in terms most clear and unambiguous, the doctrine of election, seems to have no alternative but either to dishonour God's moral character or to dishonour his inspired Word. If he reject the doctrine of election, which is so clearly revealed in many Scriptures, he dishonours God's unerring Word in some of its clearest utterances. We give one example. He disbelieves our Lord's unmistakeable words, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," taken in connection with his subsequent words, "No man can come to me except the Father draw him" (John vi. 87, 44). If, on the other hand, embracing that doctrine, he believes that the eternal happiness of the few, and the eternal misery of all the rest, is in each case the result of God's elective will, he dishonours God's moral character; for he believes that although God, who created the entire race in a fallen nature, is able to regenerate and sanctify them all, he chooses, nevertheless, to regenerate and sanctify only a minority of them, and to deliver up all the rest, unregenerate and unpardoned, to an eternal hell. To believe this is to hold a faith which exhibits God as preferring the eternal torment of the great bulk of our adult race to their eternal happiness. So to picture God is to impeach his moral character. Nevertheless, looking only at its loving aspect, as regards the elect, and with eyes askance from its revolting aspect, the Calvinist holds this faith. The Arminian can not and will not shut his eyes to the latter aspect, and is prepared to make any sacrifice rather than thus to sacrifice, as it seems to him, God's moral character. Therefore, by vain efforts to explain away the obvious and literal meaning of Scripture texts, he sacrifices the doctrine of election which the New

Testament so clearly reveals. In his heart the Calvinist is equally jealous of God's glory, but he cannot surrender that clearly revealed doctrine. He does not see so vividly as does his Arminian brother that the Divine character is implicated. Doubtless he would much rather not see it, because he perceives very clearly the philosophical truth, that it is God, the creator and sole sustainer of all things, who alone *can* decide the destinies of his subjects, whether human or angelic, and especially of those of them who have fallen from their allegiance to him; because he alone can withhold or impart that regenerating and sanctifying grace the imparting or withholding of which decides in every case the fitness of the fallen one for heaven or for perdition. The Calvinist tells us that in saying that "all things are of God," and that "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," the Scriptures only re-affirm their own teaching, that there is one God, who is the sole creator and sustainer of all things, and that their doctrine of election is simply a practical manifestation of these high truths. He reminds us that all human hearts are "in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth them whithersoever he will" (Prov. xxi. 1). For these reasons, based in Scripture, and which his natural reason recognises as necessary truths, he cannot sacrifice the Scripture doctrine of election. And, equally, the Arminian cannot believe in it; and his reason for non-belief would, we think, be more valid than it is if he explained it thus: "I withhold my belief, because to believe that God, who creates all men fallen, elects a minority of them to salvation, and that although a Saviour exists, with full powers to regenerate and save every one of the fallen ones, he will, nevertheless, deliver up all mankind, except that minority, to an eternal suffering in an eternal hell; to believe this is to believe that God, who is infinite in goodness and in love, can be also infinitely cruel." If this were the reason which the Arminian assigned, it would be unquestionably valid.

However, the thing we affirm is fact. There *are* two doctrinal faiths instead of only one faith in evangelical churches, the plurality originating in an unscriptural belief held in common by the parties who differ, viz., the belief of an eternal torment, which contradicts many Scriptures. The important question then is, How can the required unity of faith be realised? We answer, By banishing that unscriptural belief, and substituting for it the faith which Scripture teaches, viz., the literal destruction of the wicked, as we read (Ps. cxlv. 20), "All the wicked will he destroy." In their humanity, the wicked will be for ever destroyed. In their immortal spirits, regenerated and pardoned, they will be eternally saved through Christ, the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." This very serious stumbling-block—the belief of an eternal misery—being removed, and the inspired word recognised as truth, which testifies that "the living God is the Saviour of *all* men," we ask, What may rightly prevent evangelical Christians, Calvinist and Arminian, who believe in one Lord, from manifesting further their unity by holding only one faith. If it be true that God, through Christ, will finally save all men, we are sure that every Church of Christ on earth, which recognises this truth, will, not only most reverentially, but lovingly and adoringly, acquiesce in whatever *method* his infinite wisdom may please to employ to accomplish it. If God, the only wise, who has introduced into the angelic world, and into our own, different grades and dignities among those who inhabit them, should please to make important distinctions among redeemed men; should he please to elect to distinguished honour a small minority of our redeemed race, giving to them eternal life in their persons equally as in their rational spirits, and, together with a resemblance to Christ in their glorified bodies, a spiritual oneness with him like unto his oneness with the Father, thus elevating them to the highest rank in heaven, viz., to that of brotherhood with their God-Man Redeemer; while, on the other hand, as an

eternal protest against sin, should he please to punish the unpardoned sins of all the rest of our fallen race, by destroying for ever their persons as men, while reserving, nevertheless, their immortal spirits to be finally regenerated and sanctified because he has redeemed them, thus fitting them to rank with the angels in heaven; we say, if this be the true meaning of Scripture, in its doctrine of election, on the one hand, also regarding the non-elect, viz., the "world," the "all men," the "every man," which Christ came to save, on the other; all that is needed to accomplish the desiderated oneness of faith is, that the Churches, Calvinist and Arminian, should alike see it to be so. Thus recognising God's universal love, neither party will feel compelled, as each does now, to explain away the true meaning, or true teaching, of the twelve texts quoted in Chapter VI.; and the pious Arminian will rejoice to accept, in its most literal sense, the great doctrine which he reads in many texts, and of which 2 Tim. i. 9 is an example, viz., "*Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*" Instead of a stumbling-block, this most cheering text will be to him a theme of joyous praise and adoring thankfulness to the sovereign Jehovah, who is, with equal truth, the God of love, when "He has mercy on whom he will have mercy," and when "whom he will he hardeneth." Though seeming in this latter case to be the opposite of love, all immortals will finally know that He who created them in love, and who in doing so foreknew unerringly all issues, will make the immortality bestowed an immortal blessing. All he begins in love, OF NECESSITY HE ENDS IN LOVE. "I change not" (Mal. iii. 6).

We repeat, that, in addition to the more direct reasons we have given, we deem it a strong presumptive evidence against the truth of an eternal torment, that its belief has divided in doctrine the Christian Church.

## REFLECTIONS ON TOPICS DISCUSSED.

SALVATION and perdition are the most momentous of all subjects, and we may suppose the question asked, Can it be true that our Lord, who, on taking his final leave of his disciples, said to them, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," would suffer his Churches to mistake at all his teaching on either of these topics, and especially that he would suffer a misconception of one or both of them to continue through more than eighteen centuries? Should this question be put to us, we will reply by asking another. The fact being unquestionable that the Jews were God's peculiar people, and that the Old Testament reveals to them the prospective advent of a Saviour—their Messiah—we ask, Can it be true that God did, nevertheless, permit them to be blind to the actual advent of that Saviour when he appeared, and that he has postponed, through more than eighteen centuries, the removal of a blindness so awful to them in its consequences? Can it be true that, instead of an early interposition to enlighten and spiritualise them, it is in reference to a period so very distant that Holy Writ testifies (Heb. viii. 10), "After those days, saith the Lord," *i. e.*, almost or quite two thousand years after their Messiah shall appear, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people"? Viewed from our stand-point, these things appear more than improbable. Our limited conceptions would pronounce them morally impossible. We should say, it is certain God will not thus permanently withhold a light and influence so important. They are the children of faithful Abraham, whom he

so highly distinguished, and called his friend. He will not thus awfully postpone. Yet we know these things are literally true. The Jews *were* blind to Messiah's advent; and now, at the distance of more than eighteen hundred years, they are still blind to the fact that their Messiah has appeared. They "deny the Lord that bought them" (2 Pet. ii. 1). Nevertheless, the event is certain; that blindness will yet be removed. And in like manner, if the record be true which affirms that "Christ died for all," and that "God, our Saviour, will have all men to be saved;" if it be true that Jesus Christ is the propitiation, "not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" if it be true that the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world," and that "Christ will draw all men unto him;" if this one thing, presented in terms so varied, be indeed the truth of God; and if it be also scripturally true that the everlasting punishment which our Lord announces is the everlasting loss of the body, then, although Christian men have been blind to these truths of mighty import through eighteen hundred years, their blindness will yet, we doubt not, also be removed. How abundant are the proofs we possess that "God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts;" also, how obvious to its sincere believer is the Scripture truth, that the supreme Jehovah "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

God has endowed our fallen race with immortality. We say then, as surely as God is love, and as his power and knowledge are infinite, so surely the immortality he bestows will be a blessing to every one endowed therewith. This is not only true, but it is necessarily true. To say it is possible that a benevolent Creator, whose knowledge is infinite, might thus endow some one or more of his creatures, foreknowing that the endowment would be to them an eternal curse, is to utter an obvious contradiction. To believe this of a Creator, who foreknows the result, and who is also essentially benevolent,



would be to stultify our reason. If, like ourselves, God did not foreknow the future, it might possibly seem to us that he might perchance thus endow, *in the hope* that the immortality given would be a blessing. But this would not be a reasonable notion, because a benevolent Creator would not impress on any one of his creatures the awful stamp of immortality, if he was ignorant whether the gift bestowed would be an immortal blessing or an eternal curse. Obviously, a Creator that would do this *would* not be—*could* not be—benevolent. Obviously, a benevolent Creator could not give that very awful gift except as a *known eternal blessing*. We perceive, therefore, that the data which the Scriptures supply, viz., that God's power, knowledge, and benevolence are infinite, make necessarily certain that the immortality he bestows will be an eternal blessing to every one whom he thus highly distinguishes; and the many texts which tell us in varied terms that Christ is the Saviour of all men, and that God will have all men to be saved, *infallibly attest* this logical truth.

It will not be denied that if we have explained correctly the salvation which the New Testament reveals, that revelation is "glad tidings" to an extent which surpasses exceedingly the extent commonly believed. The revelation that Christ died for all, and is the Saviour of all men, is most legibly written, but it has been so darkened and buried from sight by a mistaken interpretation of a few Scripture texts, that its literal truth, though essential to the harmony of Scripture, has been to the churches practically a hidden truth. It has been as "treasure hid in a field." But we have seen that the words "everlasting punishment," whose misinterpretation has been suffered through so many ages to shut out this glorious truth from view, is the everlasting loss of the body; and that the immortal spirits of our entire fallen race will be finally saved by God's eternal Son, because "he gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." Thus, many Scriptures which, had the common belief been true, must have remained unful-

filled for ever, will be literally verified ; and the design of the Father, who, as an Apostle affirms, " sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," will be proved not to have been a vain design as regards any portion—and therefore certainly not as regards the far larger portion—of that total of mankind which he was sent to save. It will be literally and fully accomplished.

Ours being a fallen world, and all mankind, therefore, in the absence of a Redeemer, exposed to an absolute perdition, the announcement of a Saviour is unquestionably good tidings, even though he should finally save only a fraction—suppose a tenth or a fiftieth—of adult mankind. As regards the great remainder, however, if it were fact that an eternal misery awaits them, it could not be denied that they would have infinite cause to wish that they had not been born. But if the things be true which Holy Writ affirms, viz., that " Christ died for all," and that " God our Saviour will have all men to be saved," then we can understand the announcement which the Angel addressed to the Shepherds, " Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people;" for its words, "*which shall be to all people*," instead of being very seriously and grievously delusive, are literal truth ; and our remark is confirmed that the revelations of Scripture in this matter are good tidings to an extent incomparably, yea *infinitely*, exceeding what has been, and is now, the common belief of the churches.

The supposed revelation of an eternal misery as the destiny of all who die unregenerate—*i. e.*, of the great bulk of adult mankind—casts a gloom too awful to contemplate on God's creation of our fallen race. According to this, for each adult whose final destiny will be happiness, there are at least a score (humanly speaking) to whom it will be an eternal suffering. How dreadful is the thought ; and how infinitely better for mankind, *as a whole*, if that creative work had never been commenced ! But how cheering, yea transporting, it is to know

that there are in the inspired book lights which, though long clouded from view, are potent to dissipate the gloom; and that we have among them one so unmistakeable as the following, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

That Christ redeemed, not his elect only, but even those who deny him, we are taught by the Apostle Peter, when he wrote (2 Peter ii. 1), "Denying the Lord *who bought them*;" and although it is certain, as regards all who die unregenerate, that they shall not "attain to the resurrection from the dead," *i. e.*, to a permanent resurrection, yet being bought—redeemed—we may not doubt that after they have paid the penalty of sin in the second death of their bodies, the divine Redeemer, one part of whose mission is "to give repentance and forgiveness of sins," will vouchsafe to their immortal spirits these invaluable gifts. Has he indeed bought them, and shall he be finally careless or indifferent to receive value for the purchase? To buy them is to redeem, and to redeem is as certainly to save them.

We know there are many Christian brethren who say, I do not understand the redemption of Christ as a salvation absolutely secured to all for whom it was designed. It is such only to those who accept it. I understand it as a rope held out to a man at the bottom of a deep pit. The fact that it is offered does not make sure that he shall avail himself of it. That rests with himself. He who offers it is faithful. He will be sure to rescue. But the captive must grasp the rope. If he don't grasp it, that is his fault. We reply, Admitting that to be true, it is also true that his grasping the rope is sure, certain, inevitable, unless he be blind, insane, or defective in muscular power. But suppose he be all of these, how then? And God's inspired word teaches us that such exactly is man's spiritual condition *naturally*. The non-elect of mankind, *i. e.*, the great bulk of our race, are without spiritual life, which is necessary to spiritual action, equally as physical

life is necessary to bodily action. Of what value then is the rope, considered simply in itself? A rope which will not be used, and *which he who offers it knows will not be used!* Is this redemption? By redemption we understand something which redeems. A redemption which does not redeem, what is it but a name? It is a shadow without the substance. In the texts we have quoted and others, the doctrine of universal redemption, the redemption of all men—the reality, not the shadow—is most clearly taught. This glorious truth seen and realised, what a fitness we discover in the sublime appeal of the Psalmist, and with what deep emotion must the heart of every one who realises that truth respond to the appeal. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof;” while, if the opposite belief so commonly entertained were fact, how cutting and how cruel would be the sarcasm which that appeal involves in reference to the great bulk of this earth’s population; that vast majority who live and die unregenerate. In such case, truth would require the words to be altered thus: “The Lord reigneth, let a few of earth’s inhabitants rejoice; and the remaining millions of her population, which no man can number, let these curse for ever the day of their birth.” Awful words these; but if the popular belief be a true belief, how clearly does the awfulness of the words consist in the literal truth they express. How clearly also does this fact testify that that common belief is dishonouring to God, and cannot therefore be the truth which his word teaches.

The Churches cannot consistently hold the conflicting propositions, that God is love, and that he will nevertheless, by reason of sin, pour out his wrath *for ever* upon multitudes of his rational creatures, without assuming that his creation of immortals, both angels and men, was an experiment which has issued in a huge and terrible disappointment; that he had calculated on a universal loyalty, but was awfully mistaken; that he created them for eternal happiness, but discovered

when too late that vast numbers of them turned out so very differently from what he had expected, that their eternal misery is the inevitable issue, notwithstanding his provision of a Saviour ; and that his nature being love, he will of necessity lament and bemoan that experiment throughout eternity. For the fact that some or many—no matter how many—of his rational offspring will be blessed with an endless felicity, will have no more power to console the universal Father under a disappointment so terrible, than would the knowledge that some of his children were in perfect health console the earthly father of a large family, whose remaining children were prostrated by incurable disease, or writhing in convulsive agonies. But all Christian men will agree that this cannot be true. God needs not the flow of time to add to his knowledge. Through eternity all things are continuously “naked and opened” to his view. It is a true saying, and recognised as such by the most eminent theologians, that with God, the past, the present, and the future are one eternal now. His infinite knowledge makes experiment and disappointment alike impossible to him. In the fact that he is essentially and infinitely benevolent, we have an unfailing certainty that God would not create any being, rational or irrational, foreknowing that, if created, such being would, and therefore *designing that he should*, be everlastingly miserable. Seeing, then, that there are beings innumerable destined for immortality, whom God has created in a fallen nature, from the consequences of which, so inconceivably awful and terrible, nothing less than his imparted regenerating grace can avail to rescue them, it is cause for unspeakable joy and adoring love to God that the universal Creator is “love”; in other words, that he is a universal Father, and that we have so many clear and unmistakeable inspired assurances that he “will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” as we read 1 Tim. ii. 4. When St. Paul wrote those words, God knew unerringly whether all men *will be* finally saved. If then he

knew that all men *will not* be finally saved, can we reasonably believe that the Author of Holy Writ would cause his Apostle to record therein that God "will have all men to be saved," *i. e.*, that he will have something which he knows at the time will certainly not be: also, that he would further cause him to write, "*The living God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe*" (1 Tim. ii. 4, and iv. 10). If the reader believes this possible, we do not hesitate to say that his conception of God is, in our view, a most disparaging conception.

That "God is love," and that his eternal reign should be the reign of eternal love, gives an incomparably higher impression of his character than that it should be the conjoint reign of eternal love and eternal vengeance; vengeance being thus exalted to rank among God's essential attributes. None other than his essential attributes can exist eternally in God. Only those attributes which have already eternally existed can hereafter eternally exist in God. He cannot have a new essential attribute. Vengeance is, therefore, of necessity excluded, and the opposite is directly affirmed, *viz.*, "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever" (Ps. ciii. 9).

We will suppose the reader to say to us, The views you propound are of mighty import. They present an eternity of high felicity as awaiting finally those on whom the very awful awards of the judgment shall be executed; that is, awaiting that overwhelming majority of our race whose final destiny has hitherto been believed to be endless agony and despair. But if those views were correct, might we not rightly expect to see them very distinctly revealed in the Scriptures? We know how clear are the revelations of Scripture in all matters which deeply concern us; how decisive the language therein addressed to the righteous and the wicked; and how exact our Lord's account of the destiny of each at the final judgment. Your doctrine is very startling! That destiny, so

awful and terrible for the wicked, will, you say, be finally reversed. This is indeed startling! for you do not point to any portion of Scripture which affirms, or even intimates, such a reversal; and I think this surely is needed to sustain a belief so extraordinary.

In reply, we not only admit, but affirm with the objector, that the sentence which the supreme Judge will pronounce on the wicked is awful and terrible; but we do not say that it will be *reversed*. We believe that it will be most exactly executed. But we do not believe that its penalty, though inconceivably awful in its infliction, will be an eternal agony or suffering, because we confide in the truth of God's Word, which assures us, and repeats the assurance in many varied forms, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men. We look, therefore, to their salvation ultimately, through Christ, in verification of the many unmistakeable announcements of the unerring Word; and this, though it cannot be a reversal of a sentence already executed, will be a very decisive and unutterably delightful change from it. But you say of this opinion that it is indeed startling. We ask, then, Do you remember that God is love, and can you rightly say that *any* thing, how wonderful soever, is startling or incredible as proceeding from a God who is love, and whose purposes are ever the united result of a wisdom and a love which are infinite? Go back to the history of Saul of Tarsus. We see him first as a fiercely impetuous fanatic, highly indignant at what he considered the attempted subversion of the Jewish faith. Towards Jesus of Nazareth his feeling was like that of the infidel of modern times, whose motto was, "Crush the wretch." We see him "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the disciples of the Lord, and guarding the clothes of the murderers of one of his most devoted servants, who, whilst dying, said (Acts vii. 56), "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." The Lord Jesus, thus standing, saw his devoted servant Stephen in the

agonies of martyrdom. He saw also Saul standing near, abetting those murderers. And what do we next learn? It is that, when on a journey, suddenly there appeared round about that same Saul a light from heaven, which struck him to the earth; and he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" We learn also that three days after this the Lord Jesus appeared in a vision to his disciple Ananias, and said to him concerning this murderer of his faithful Stephen, "He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." We ask, then, Is not *this* startling? And if, when Stephen said, "I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God," any one had responded, Yes, and Jesus sees thy murderer Saul, and in a few years that same Saul will be honoured above all men by him who now sees you both: he will be caught up by Jesus to the third heaven, and privileged to see and hear things which none had ever seen or heard before, and "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Would not *that* have been startling? Yet so it was. And after this may we not rightly ask, Can anything which manifests love be accounted too surprising for a God who is love to effect, *and most especially when the thing which surprises us is needed to verify some of the most important announcements of his inspired word?* How manifold is the evidence we possess, that "God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts."

It is true, however, that we do not point to any text of Scripture which affirms in so many words that Christ will finally regenerate and save the spirits of those to whom, as the Supreme Judge, he has previously addressed the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." But this is not needed. It is enough to know that without this the Scriptures cannot be fulfilled. Without this, the living God cannot be the Saviour of all men, as his inspired word affirms he is (1 Tim. iv. 10). Without this, God's



object in providing a Saviour, and which he inspired his Apostle to record, will not be accomplished, viz., "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of *the world*" (1 John iv. 14). Without this the special purpose for which Christ was manifested will not be realised; for we read (1 John iii. 8), "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." And most of all, without this the direct words of God himself, the words which he spoke to the serpent concerning the seed of the woman, cannot be verified. His words were, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel;" whereas hitherto, in a most important particular, the contrary is the fact. It is the heel of the tempter, not his head, that Christ has hitherto bruised. Almost six thousand years are now gone; the Messiah has personally appeared, yet Satan has ever been, and is still, the "god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4); *his subjects vastly outnumber Messiah's subjects, our Lord himself being our authority*, for he has said, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Also, he calls Satan the prince of this world (John xii. 31, and John xiv. 30). If, then, the countless myriads of those who have died unregenerate, and are now awaiting the judgment,—who also form the great bulk of our adult race; if these shall never be transferred to Christ; in other words, if Satan shall finally succeed in his great design to inflict upon them, alike in body and in their immortal spirits, an irreparable ruin, how can it ever be truly said that the seed of the woman has bruised the head of the serpent? Only this could be said, that he has made an inroad into Satan's kingdom, and rescued a small minority of his subjects from his relentless grasp; in short, that he has bruised the heel, certainly not the head, of the would-be destroyer, whom in such case we might rightly call the

*triumphant* destroyer. If thus finally successful, Satan may exult over our Lord, and speak even derisively of his mission "to destroy the works of the Devil." How awful soever may be the punishment finally inflicted upon himself, he will nevertheless have accomplished more—infinately more—than seems to have been his object. His object was to ruin our first parents, probably by bringing upon them immediate death. But if successful to the extent commonly believed, how mighty will have been his revenge for the curse pronounced upon him: a revenge which might seem to have been typified by the final revenge of Samson upon his enemies. In Samson's last conflict with the Philistines, he succeeded in involving thousands of them in a common destruction with himself. But Satan, if thus successful, will have involved in a common ruin with himself, myriads of myriads of men and women, all born of parents whom he had successfully tempted to sin; all, therefore, from their first existence, if not indeed his subjects, at least his prepared prey; consigning them to a death absolutely eternal in its agonies, and this, notwithstanding the direct assurance of the Supreme Jehovah, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent;" notwithstanding also, the infallible record which affirms of the Redeemer that "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. liii. 11).

"*Shall be satisfied!*" What extraordinary words are these to be used as applicable to a divine Saviour, who is love: who came into the world to "destroy the works of the devil," and "to save that which was lost;" who has power to regenerate all men, and to save all men through his bestowed "repentance and forgiveness of sins;" but whose redeeming work—as Christian men believe—will leave countless myriads of men and women finally unsaved; that is, will leave the professed object of his mission, as regards the great bulk of our fallen race—excepting infants—utterly unaccomplished; and the omnipotent Redeemer, who is love, contemplating this

work, and seeing this awfully defective result of the travail of his soul, shall nevertheless avow that he is *satisfied*!! Extraordinary indeed! if such will in truth be the result; and a professed orthodoxy insists that it will. Its creed is that the infants of mankind will be saved, also that small fraction of adults who die regenerate—born again; and that all whom God suffers to die unregenerate—not born again; and who we cannot reasonably doubt are already numerous enough to people scores of worlds as extensively as our world is now peopled, will be doomed to endless torments in an eternal hell. If this be a true creed, it is certain that God, whose knowledge is infinite, knew that this would be the final destiny of each and all of this innumerable multitude of men and women before he brought any of them into being. It would have been better for them—infinately better—if they had not been born; and the conviction of this truth in the Creator's mind, when he kindled within them the vital spark, was infinitely deeper and more vivid than it can possibly be in any creature mind. This incontrovertible fact we deem conclusive to prove that the Creed is not, and cannot be, true. Such, however, is the practical value which a professed orthodoxy attaches to the unerring texts which affirm that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of *the world*," and that "Christ died *for all*."

We repeat, that although the Scriptures do not say in terms, that Christ will regenerate and save after the judgment, and even if it were true that they do not directly teach that any human spirit, unsaved in this world, will or may be saved in the next—an assumption that 1 Cor. v. 5, and 1 Cor. iii. 15 clearly disprove—nevertheless our proofs are ample. The numerous texts which testify that Christ "is the Saviour of all men;" that he "gave himself a ransom for all;" that he "will have all men to be saved;" and that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" these are the rock of our authority—an impregnable one, as we believe, in this matter.

But we must notice the remaining objection (page 174). A reader was supposed to remark, that the revelations of Scripture are full and clear in matters which deeply concern us. To this we reply, *That* is only when those revelations demand our personal actings. What can more deeply concern every individual of our fallen race, than the redemption of the world by Christ? Yet, until the actual appearance of our Lord, little was known concerning him, and nothing clearly or correctly, even to God's own peculiar people. He was announced to our first parents as the seed of the woman, who should bruise the head of the serpent. But neither they, nor any who succeeded them during the four thousand years which elapsed before his personal advent, could understand, as we do now, the meaning of those words. Even the Prophets who were inspired to prophesy concerning him did not clearly understand their own predictions, as we read, 1 Pet. i. 10-12; and it was not until his actual coming, when, after his resurrection, he "expounded to his disciples, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself," that the previous revelations concerning him were fully and accurately understood. Then the command quickly followed, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Thus we see that the most important revelation which the Bible contains was only dim and obscure until men's activities were needed to carry out God's designs therein.

Another instance. The conversion of the Gentiles was a very important fact. The Apostle Paul calls it (Eph. iii. 4, 5), "The mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men;" and (Col. i. 26), "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest unto his saints." If it were Jehovah's design that all facts involving men's eternal salvation should be clearly revealed to his Church on earth, the admission of the Gentiles into that Church, after their exclusion through thousands of years, would have been clearly revealed to the Jews. But, throughout the entire Jewish dispensation, the Jewish

nation, who were then God's only recognised people on earth, were suffered to believe—notwithstanding the many intimations their Scriptures supplied to the contrary—that they would continue to be thus exclusively God's people to the end of time; in other words, that the Gentiles would be for ever shut out. Certainly, they had incomparably less scriptural authority, of a clear and decisive character, to believe that in the end of the world Gentiles would become God's favoured people, than we have now to believe that Christ “is the Saviour of all men,” and that he will finally “draw all men unto him.” It behoves us, therefore, to be cautious in the data we assume, and in the inferences we draw, and to remember the inspired apothegm, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing” (Prov. xxv. 2).

But, in truth, there is in the New Testament Scriptures no concealment of the fact that Christ died for all, and that the design of his mission to earth was to save all, for himself informs us (John xii. 47), “I came to save the world.” The things concealed, or not plainly revealed, are the adjuncts of this fact, viz., the time and the manner in which this salvation will be effected as regards a large majority of our race; while concerning the minority, called “God's elect,” we are very plainly taught that the time is before death, and the manner, faith in Christ and a holy obedience to his commandments. Of this minority, to whom is exclusively vouchsafed the grace of a saving faith in Christ while yet in the body, and which secures to them “the redemption of their body,” as we read, Rom. viii. 28; as we read also, John vi. 40, 44, 54 (“I will raise him up at the last day”); of these we are told that “the living God” is “*especially*” their Saviour (1 Tim. iv. 10); and although we are told in the same verse that he is “the Saviour of *all* men,” yet, no particulars being supplied by Holy Writ as to either time or manner, Christian men take the liberty, not merely to doubt, but positively to reject or ignore this unerring testimony, and all the numerous other

inspired testimonies to the like effect. They seem to say to each other, As regards a salvation of any kind after death, no evidence shall induce us to believe in it which is not direct and unmistakeable. It is true we read that "Christ died for all"—that he "came to save the world"—that "the living God is the Saviour of all men," and that he "will have all men to be saved;" but we know that *all* men are *not* saved in this life, and we are sure that all who die unsaved will not be saved at all, because our Lord has said of them, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." How then can it possibly benefit these wretched ones that St. Paul declares, "Christ died for all," or that our Lord has said, "I will draw all men unto me"? Everlasting punishment is distinctly affirmed. *This, of necessity, means everlasting torment or misery*, and no matter how this text may seem to conflict with other texts, or with the scriptural character of God, to this we must adhere. An eternal misery will be the final destiny of a very large portion of our race. Such is the faith called orthodox, on this momentous subject. It determines for itself what portions of Holy Writ it shall accept, and what other portions it shall reject, or explain away.

But is it lawful to deal thus capriciously with God's unerring word? May we select one class of texts for our credence, and reject another class? Surely we may not! We must believe that there is truth in *all* of them, and only truth, whether we discover it or not. We ask, then, Is it true, as Christian men believe, that our Lord's words, "everlasting punishment," mean, *of necessity*, an everlasting infliction of suffering? If this be the only legitimate meaning, we are free to confess that their inference is inevitable. An eternal misery will be the final destiny of a very large portion of our race, and it follows, with equal certainty, that God, who foreknows the future as exactly as he knows the past, *created them for this foreknown destiny!* But we are sure this *cannot be true*. It would falsify many Scriptures. It would

flagrantly contradict Ps. clxv. 9, "His tender mercies are over all his works." *It would convert God's creation of a very large majority of our adult race, into a work the direct opposite of tender mercy; a work of infinite cruelty. We are sure that cannot be true.* We are, therefore, compelled to understand the words "everlasting punishment," as meaning what Holy Writ in sundry other texts substitutes for them, viz., an "everlasting destruction." Thus we no longer seem to see Scripture testifying against Scripture. Its everlasting punishment of those who die unregenerate is verified in the everlasting destruction of their persons as men; their humanity is forfeited for ever; and its universal redemption is verified in the subsequent salvation of their immortal spirits through Christ, "the living God, who is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

But why should Christian men doubt the plain teaching of 1 Tim. ii. 4; why should they doubt that God will finally save, through Christ, every child of Adam—not one excepted—whom, with a certain foreknowledge of the final issue, he has destined for immortality? Do they not believe that, at all times, and in all places, the conversion of men to God is God's work? Do they not believe the inspired testimony which we read, Heb. viii. 10, 11, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Of course, they believe this. The Churches look forward to a millennium in which this love and obedience to God will be universal. Thus we see that from first to last—in its commencement in fallen men on earth, equally as in its primeval origin and final completion in heaven—salvation is of God, not of man. Man is only its intelligent subject. He has no share whatever in its origination. Although in their

multiplied religious willings, strivings, and actings, all whom God saves on earth *seem* to share largely in effecting their own salvation, yet of all these pious activities God himself is the author. St. Paul makes this very clear when he writes, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; *for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*" (Phil. ii. 12, 13). This teaching is unmis-takeable. It reveals God as the primary actor, who works in his chosen ones "both to will and to do." Born spiritually dead, he quickens them into spiritual life (Eph. ii. 1). He "puts his laws into their mind and writes them in their hearts;" thus our Lord's words are realised, "Ye must be born again." How clearly this same Apostle tells us that salvation is wholly of God, and not at all of man, when he writes (Rom. ix. 16), "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy." Seeing, then, that salvation is thus essentially and entirely God's work, we ask who may rightly doubt that before "the end" shall come, of which we read 1 Cor. xv. 24, God will secure that salvation of *all* men which his inspired word affirms he "will have" (1 Tim. ii. 4). He *WILLS* that it shall be.

We have adverted to the longed-for millennium; and we ask, why is it postponed through so many thousands of years? Clearly, certainly, and undeniably, it is not through any defect of love in God, for "God is LOVE." As certainly, therefore, and undeniably, the reason for this is that his infinite wisdom demands the postponement. Will any one say that the cause is in man, not in God, *i. e.*, in man's natural free will, so perverse, and so opposed to God and to the holiness he requires? If so, we ask, will not man's natural will present the same hindrance to this happy state of things in the last days of the world, equally as at any earlier period? We ask, too, what is the reason that men's free will is thus naturally opposed to God? Is it not the *fallen nature* in which God's infinite wisdom, for reasons which satisfy that wisdom, has been pleased to bring them into being? Theologists may



speculate as they please on the supposed self-determining power of the human will; but, whether viewed philosophically or scripturally, nothing, to our judgment, is more certain than this, that no other than God himself can convert men's morally and spiritually wrong will into a morally and spiritually right one. *It is only HIS SPECIALLY EXERTED INFLUENCE which can make his published word EFFECTUAL to quicken men, created fallen, into spiritual life, i. e., first to give them the true repentance which that word demands, and then to "put his laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts."* Without this special influence, a Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water, but all will be in vain (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7). No lasting and spiritual benefit will result from it. Had God seen it wise to impart this renovating influence universally and continually, from the days of Adam unto the end of the world, it is certain the history of the world would have supplied no record of an universal deluge. From the beginning to the end, it would have been simply a register of an unbroken series of millenniums. Surely no Christian man can or will deny this. No man, who unites in the public prayers constantly offered in our evangelical churches and chapels for the conversion of the unconverted in the congregation, can rightly deny that the conversion to God of those persons is indeed God's work. If it be not so, he should cease to be one of those who pray for it. We re-affirm, therefore, that the numerous texts, some of which are quoted in a recent page (179), ought to satisfy us, without any more exact and detailed utterances, that Christ will finally save all men. Because "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35), those texts are to us a divine pledge that, sooner or later, God will regenerate and save all mankind.

But the Churches do not recognise this truth; and it may be too much to expect that the convictions, even though erroneous, which pious men have had through life on these momentous subjects, will yield at once to a new light, even

though it be proved to be the unerring light of Scripture. To those who doubt, therefore, which of the two opposites is the true Scripture doctrine, viz., the eternal misery of a large portion of mankind, or the final happiness of them all, we say, Your own natural reason, legitimately exercised, decides unerringly the question. We show it thus. When men undertake a great work, our confidence in their success is measured by the opinion we form of their qualifications to execute it. If these are known to be of a high character, we feel a high confidence in their success. We say, then, God's creation of men whom he has pleased to dignify with immortality, *and for whom, therefore, he designed an immortal happiness*, was a work of high moment. His qualifications for it were a benevolence, a knowledge, and a power, all of which are infinite. We appeal, then, to men's natural reason. We ask concerning a Creator so qualified, Could He, *even by possibility*, fail in the thing he designed? With an infinite power to recover men from the fallen state in which he gives them being; a power which their earthly death cannot impair; a power therefore, hereafter equally as now, to mould their character to his wishes; to "put his laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Heb. viii. 10); a power which he can legitimately exercise AT ALL PERIODS SO LONG AS CHRIST THE MEDIATOR REIGNS; could He, even by possibility, fail to make their bestowed immortality a blessing to them? Is it possible that, notwithstanding all his infinite powers to bless, and his *positive design to bless*, the immortality which God gives will prove to the immortals, or any of them, finally, an eternal curse? Human reason says, Impossible! It tells us that to suppose this possible is to believe a manifest contradiction. It tells us we have no option but to accept, in their plainest and most literal sense, the very many texts which teach Christ's redemption and consequent salvation of *all* men, without exception, whom he has destined for immortality; and that when St. Paul writes (Rom. viii. 22), "for

we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," and affirms (ver. 21) that "the creature itself" (which in this connection cannot mean other than the *rational* creation) "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God," he publishes a truth which cannot be gainsayed without a palpable contradiction of some one or more of God's revealed essential attributes. Either his POWER, his KNOWLEDGE, or his LOVE—one or all of these—instead of being literally infinite, must be DEFECTIVE, to make the failure of that affirmed glorious deliverance possible. This glorious deliverance is therefore certain. And although infinite wisdom has decreed to all fallen immortals more or less of suffering prior to their restoration from their fallen state, and to the great bulk of them the bitter pains of the second death, yet, being all redeemed, a glorious future, a blissful immortality, lies before them all. Through the divine Redeemer, "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," their *final* salvation is secured. The decree has gone forth. The unerring word affirms it. They "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The Redeemer "shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." So wrote Isaiah (liii. 11). His own words, too, are on record: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* men unto me (John xii. 32). Though heaven and earth pass away, yet "the word of God liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23). An immortal happiness will, therefore, assuredly be theirs. What infinite reason, then, finally, will God's entire rational creation have with joyous exultation to cry, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."



## CHRIST'S DEATH;

### HOW DOES IT AVAIL FOR MAN'S SALVATION?

BEFORE answering this question we will change its form. We ask, then, How does the death of Christ restore that which Adam lost? How does it atone for the personal sins of his descendants?

The thing which Adam lost for himself and his posterity was his and their title to life, life spiritual and life natural. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Spiritual death was the immediate result to Adam when he sinned. Thus God's threat was literally verified. In that day—that moment—he lost his spiritual life, that life which is essential to a holy communion with God. And we cannot doubt scripturally or reasonably that if God had not devised a scheme of mercy, his physical death—which, though impending and finally certain, was postponed—would have been equally prompt. In that same moment he would have been destroyed, both body and soul, for ever. Thus his descendants would have been, as it were, punished beforehand. They would have been condemned to non-existence; eternally shut out from being. But Christ has brought life and immortality to light. He has recovered their forfeited immortality for Adam and his children; and God has ordained that their onward travel to its high felicities shall be through much suffering, and, finally, through death itself.

But how does Christ's death avail to repair Adam's transgression, *i. e.*, to save mankind from an eternal death, and to

insure to them an immortal life ? The text already noticed, 1 Cor. xv. 22, not only affirms that it does this, but it explains also the manner of it ; " As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." In our comment on that text we have remarked on the fact. We will now notice more exactly the manner. The text teaches that man's forfeited life shall be recovered through Christ, in the same manner as—*even so as*—it was lost through Adam. We are thus brought to inquire, How did Adam's sin entail upon his posterity the forfeiture of their immortality ? It was because of the natural union or oneness which exists between him and them. When he sinned they were in him as his natural offspring. Therefore they are involved in the consequences of his transgression. He sinned, and thus became unclean in the sight of God ; and we know it is written (Job xiv. 4), " Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? *Not one.*" Practically, therefore, and in its effects, Adam's sin was also their sin. And their restoration through Christ can be accomplished only in the same manner, viz., by their equally true union and oneness with Christ, who is called in Scripture the "second Adam." But how can men become one with Christ as truly as they are one with Adam, their natural father ? We answer, introductively, because Christ, who is the Son of God, is man's Creator ; for we read (John i. 8), " All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." He is, therefore, truly our primeval father. Clearly, if sin were absent, this fact would establish a union between the divine Son and his children of mankind, incomparably more close and intimate than their union with Adam ; *for Adam himself is their father only subordinately to him.* But sin is the barrier, and infinite love removes this barrier. Our Father Creator takes upon himself our human nature, and thus brings himself into the closest possible natural relations to us. He becomes bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. We

may, therefore, scripturally imagine him as saying, concerning our entire race, "They are my children, for I have created them. I have taken upon me also their nature. Thus I am, still more truly than was Adam, their natural father. It only remains that I become also their spiritual father, by imparting to them my regenerating and sanctifying grace. 'Created anew,' and 'born of God,' they will become also my spiritual children. I 'came to seek and to save that which was lost ;' and in my humanity I have 'tasted death for every man.' It is my mission also 'to give repentance and forgiveness of sins,' for to this end, as the Son alike of God and of man, I am 'exalted a Prince and a Saviour' (Acts v. 31). Therefore, in my own approved time, I will thus regenerate every child of fallen Adam, because he is also *my* child. When thus born again, they become one with me—I in them, and they in me. Therefore, they are as truly united with me in the merit of my atoning death, and of my perfect obedience to the divine law, as they were truly united with Adam in the guilt of his sin ; for I am indeed their father, and they are indeed my children. My sufferings and death, therefore, are also their sufferings, and through these the penalty of their sins is discharged. In like manner, my perfect righteousness is their righteousness. Thus the immortality they had forfeited in the first Adam is recovered to them in me the second Adam, and becomes their inalienable inheritance. 'Because I live, they shall live also.'"

How deeply interesting and delightful are the revelations which inspiration has vouchsafed to us concerning the near and very endearing relations to God into which fallen men are brought through the atonement of Christ ; applied to his elect through that childlike faith and confidence in him which the Holy Spirit makes the inspired word effectual to impart. Who can read those revelations, *and believe them*, without deepest emotions of love to him who not only *first*

loved us, but who has also loved us *thus* ! “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends ” ( John xv. 18 ). “ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ” ( Rom. v. 8 ). “ Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift ; ” “ Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things ; to whom be glory for ever. ”



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